

Palestinian stabs Israeli in W. Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian stabbed an Israeli at a garbage dump near a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank Wednesday, security sources said. The Israeli sustained moderate wounds in the attack. The sources said the Israeli, a civilian contractor, was stabbed while dumping garbage for the army near the settlement of Adora, south of the Palestinian city of Hebron. Israel Radio reported that he shot his assailant, who was later arrested at a Hebron hospital. The radio said the Palestinian was released recently from an Israeli prison. In the occupied Gaza Strip some 5,000 supporters of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas demonstrated Wednesday for the release of former Palestinian exiles held by Israel. Witnesses said the protesters marched through the streets of Khan Yunis hailing the return of 197 Palestinians expelled to Lebanon in December 1992, but demanded the release of those among them still imprisoned in Israel.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة منشورة من قبل مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية، الرأى

Yemeni official ends visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister Majid Abu Shawarab Wednesday left Amman at the end of a three-day visit to Jordan during which he conveyed to His Majesty King Hussein a verbal message from the Yemeni leadership on the situation in Yemen and Jordanian-Yemeni relations. In a statement to the press before his departure, Mr. Abu Shawarab thanked King Hussein for his role in ending the political crisis in Yemen. The King has expressed his readiness to play a major role to end the crisis, the Yemeni official said. He added that the Yemeni people appreciate the King's efforts exerted to achieve Yemeni national reconciliation. Mr. Abu Shawarab was seen off at the airport by the King's advisor, Khaled Al Karaki, and the Yemeni ambassador to Jordan.

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King visits army unit command

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday visited the general command of the Third Royal Armed Division, the Special Forces and the Fifth Royal Armed Division. King Hussein, who was accompanied on the visits by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai, was briefed on the duties of the formations he visited and met with their officers. Commending the Armed Forces, King Hussein expressed confidence that the Armed Forces will always maintain the high level of performance they attained. The Special Forces, he said, also have an important role in other parts of the world. "The reputation of this army, thanks to the continued efforts and the incessant giving, has exceeded the borders of this region to the world through the interaction of people with them and with those representing us here and there," the King said, referring to Jordanian forces participating in peacekeeping forces in various parts of the world.

Al Ahli retains basketball title

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Ahli Wednesday retained the first division basketball championship after scoring a 75-69 victory over all-time rivals Al Orthodoksi. Al Ahli, who had won the title in 1990 and 1992 after a decade-long reign by Al Orthodoksi, led throughout the match and ended the first half 41-35. Al Jazireh finished third. Two teams, Al Ashrafiah and Al Wifaq, were relegated while Homentmen won the second division title to return to the first division.

Two killed in Egyptian sweep

ASSIUT (R) — A policeman and a suspected militant were killed and at least two people were wounded Wednesday when police raided a militants' hideout on an island in the southern Egyptian province of Assiut, security sources said. Hundreds of policemen stormed the island of Al Badari, 100 kilometres south of Cairo. They used armoured vehicles and a helicopter to round up militants believed to have escaped there after carrying out attacks in other areas of Assiut province. Ten militants were arrested and several were seized, the sources said.

Iraq ready to repatriate Iranians

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq is prepared to repatriate thousands of Iranian civilians still in the country since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and urges Tehran to receive them, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. A Foreign Ministry statement cited by INA said Iraq was "prepared to repatriate all the Iranian refugees still on its territory and calls on the Iranian government to announce its readiness to receive the refugees who wish to go home." INA said the refugees had fled Iran during the war, adding that Baghdad had received them "in keeping with its international humanitarian commitments."

Iranian banker whipped, jailed for bribery

TEHRAN (AFP) — A senior banking official in northern Iran has been jailed for seven years and sentenced to 55 lashes of the whip for taking bribes, Jomhuri Islami newspaper reported Wednesday. Gholamreza Rostami was flogged Tuesday in the bank's executive office in the city of Sari. The authorities arrested the director of the state Sepah Bank in Mazandaran province on Nov. 1. It was the second fraud case involving Sepah in 10 days, newspapers reported on Dec. 10 that a branch manager had been arrested in Tehran on embezzlement charges. The daily Kayhan said the authorities had arrested 10 other people, including three senior bankers, on embezzlement and drug-trafficking charges.

PLO officials report stalemate in self-rule talks

Israel claims accord after Cairo meetings, but Palestinians say no deal

By Lamis K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite Israeli reports about progress in their autonomy negotiations, Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials said talks which concluded on Wednesday in Cairo, did not succeed in removing major obstacles impeding the implementation of Palestinian self-rule in Gaza Strip and Jericho.

A senior Palestinian negotiator categorically denied Israeli reports that the two sides had reached an understanding regarding control over crossing points and the area of Jericho that will come under Palestinian administration.

"This is the first in the history of negotiations that a stalemate is described as progress," PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo, who took part in the Cairo meetings, told the Jordan Times before leaving the Egyptian capital.

"We have reached no agreement whatsoever. There is a paper outlining basically Israeli ideas, and some of the Palestinian ideas raised at the negotiations. But we cannot call it an understanding, let alone an agreement," said Mr. Abed Rabbo.

Other PLO officials accused Israel of backtracking on understandings reached last week in Paris regarding the crossing points. The officials said that the Israelis had expressed readiness, in Paris, to accept a Palestinian proposal asking for four crossing points, including one for those travelling to and from Jericho and Gaza that will be fully under Palestinian control.

They also said that in Paris the Israelis did not object to expanding the area of Jericho that will come under Palestinian administration, to about 100 square kilometres.

"The Israelis have definitely retracted. There was no trace of the flexibility that they showed in Paris," said one PLO official describing the Cairo talks.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas told reporters that all proposals that were put forward in Cairo were to be discussed by both leaderships ending the talks with a more positive note.

Mr. Abbas' cautiously positive tone appeared to differ from the reaction of both Mr. Abed Rabbo and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who arrived in Cairo immediately after the negotiations, to meet with Egyptian officials.

The PLO ambassador in Amman, Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim was quoted as saying in agency reports that Mr. Arafat was going to convey to the Israelis, through Egypt, that the (Israeli) proposals were "humiliating."

But Palestinian officials said that the PLO had officially rejected the paper as a basis for an agreement despite Egyptian intervention to save the talks from reaching a deadlock.

The conflicting Palestinian and Israeli accounts of the outcome of the Cairo talks clearly indicated that Israel wants to step up pressure on the PLO to accept its proposals concerning crossing points and the area of Jericho.

Some Palestinian officials said that the Egyptians and Saudis were pressuring the PLO to accept the Israeli proposal as a compromise starting point.

According to PLO officials, what the Israelis call an understanding was basically an Israeli paper that included modification introduced by the Egyptians in an attempt to include some of the Palestinian concerns.

The paper, endorsed by the Israelis, suggests that Palestinians take part in supervising one of two windows on the King Hussein Bridge between Jordan and the West Bank under total Israeli control, they said.

"Palestinian participation will be confined to one of two windows dealing with Palestinian travellers, but the Israelis will retain control of the King Hussein Bridge," said a Palestinian official describing the Israeli proposals.

He explained that the Israeli paper made it clear by implication that the Palestinians cannot have any role over the other crossing points.

Israel Radio reported earlier on Wednesday that Israel would allow Palestinians to have checkpoints 500 metres into the border preceded by Israeli checkpoints — meaning that Israel would retain the actual control.

According to the PLO official, a number of modalities and scenarios were discussed in Cairo. He said that Israel did not have problems with the modalities as long it retained actual control over the borders and crossings.

In the paper described by the Israelis a joint understanding, Israel was ready to expand the area of Jericho to around 70 kilometres. The Palestinians insisted on 250 square kilometres within the pre-1967 war borders of the Jericho district.

The only point that the two sides seemed to be close of (Continued on page 5)

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel said Wednesday it had reached broad agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on a withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. But the PLO said they were still arguing about control of border crossings.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told a joint news conference with the PLO's Mahmoud Abbas after talks in Cairo: "The two delegations have reached a meeting of the minds on the central issues of the border crossings, the size of Jericho and matters relating to the Gaza Strip."

"The leadership of the two parties will now have to accept or reject this statement," Mr. Peres said, apparently referring to the draft agreement.

He said there were still points to be discussed, such as security arrangements on roads used by both Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and talks would continue at a lower level. He and Mr. Abbas will meet again in Cairo, possibly at the beginning of next week.

At the end of the news conference, Mr. Peres turned to Mr. Abbas, smiled, and said quietly: "I hope the leaders follow the wisdom of the delegations."

Mr. Abbas, head of the PLO team, said the ideas raised in talks here since Monday that failed to produce a final agreement would be submitted to the Israeli and PLO leaderships.

The three main obstacles were "arrangements" for crossing between Jericho and Jordan, the size of the Jericho autonomous region and "questions linked to the Gaza Strip," Mr. Peres told the press conference.

"We have drawn up a document which reflects the joint positions of the two delegations and we are now waiting the agreement of Palestinian and Israeli leaders," he said after both sides met Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak.

Mr. Peres said they agreed to continue committee meetings on security.

The coordinating committee which Mr. Peres and Mr. Abbas lead "could meet once again to this end in Cairo" next week, he said. "When the Palestinians have given their response we will give ours."

Mr. Abbas said the Egyptian efforts to broker an accord "made a great impact on the negotiations."

"I believe the negotiations have been very constructive and that the two leaderships will continue consultations and we hope that we will reach a comprehensive agreement," he said.

The Executive committee of the PLO in Tunis rejected the latest Israeli proposals and insisted that Palestinians must have total control of border crossings after Israeli withdrawals.

Committee member Samir Ghose told Reuters in Tunis that Mr. Arafat was flying to Cairo later on Wednesday to discuss problems in the talks with Mr. Mubarak. The Egyptians would also contact Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Mr. Abbas told the news conference: "The negotiations were constructive. There were some ideas that will be discussed and we will continue to consult and negotiate, and we hope to reach an agreement."

He added: "There are still differences about the issue of the crossings and other issues that will be discussed... we hope to meet again as the liaison committee within a week to achieve the required progress."

Under the accord signed in September, Israel should have started to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area on Dec. 13. Mr. Rabin forced Mr. Arafat to accept an indefinite delay on Dec. 12.

The Israelis presented new proposals on the key issues on (Continued on page 5)

U.S. protests Israeli construction, but told to mind own business

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The United States has protested to Israel against huge Jewish building projects in and around East Jerusalem, the Israeli foreign ministry said Wednesday.

U.S. Ambassador William Brown handed the protest to the ministry's deputy director, Eytan Bentsur this week.

Thousands more housing units are due to go up on territories seized in the 1967 Middle East war in a bid to maintain Israel's hold on occupied Jerusalem as a "united capital."

Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert, rejected the protest saying: "The future of Jerusalem will not be decided at the State Department, but here."

"To stop Jerusalem from becoming the capital of a Palestinian state we have to continue to build in the town and outside it," he told Israel Radio.

Mr. Olmert, right-wing Likud Party, MP, said he had no intention of developing the city to the west. He said he would concentrate on the east and north into the West Bank, to link Maale Adumim, where 15,000 settlers live, with the Holy City in one continuous built-up area.

The government announced a construction ban on occupied lands after winning the 1992 elections, but exempted settlements considered "vital" to Israel's "security," including the Jerusalem region and allowed 11,000 others to be completed.

The ban was considered crucial to winning \$10 billion loan guarantees over five years from the United States in August the same year, but Washington chopped more than \$400 million off this year's \$2 billion as a penalty for settlement building.

Israeli settlement of East Jerusalem turned the Arab population into a minority, with 150,000 Palestinians compared to 155,000 Jews. The Israeli daily Maariv said

U.S. officials were surprised by Israel's plans to expand the city and build into the occupied West Bank between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim, the largest West Bank Jewish settlement.

Maariv quoted Israeli government sources as saying Israel promised to investigate and respond to the protest. The United States is Israel's closest ally and supplier of \$3 billion in annual aid.

"I never thought they were the ones to decide the fate of Jerusalem. We will decide the fate of Jerusalem, and I say that here not in a provocative way," Mr. Olmert told Israel Radio.

Israel and the PLO have agreed to delay discussions about the future of the city during at least two years of the interim Palestinian self-rule envisaged by their September peace deal.

Israel continues to grab land, page 10

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Majali briefs lawmakers on peace talks

By Aymann Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government and the Lower House of Parliament Wednesday discussed Jordan's stand on the Arab-Israeli peace process and the progress it has achieved.

Parliamentary sources said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali briefed the House on Jordan's stand on the 26-month-old negotiations, coordination among Arab parties to the peace talks and Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

Lawmakers said Dr. Majali responded to questions raised by more than 40 deputies on almost "all issues" related to the peace talks during the session, which was held behind closed doors at the request of the prime minister.

While many deputies described Dr. Majali's two-hour statement and responses to the deputies' questions as "detailed, frank and candid," at least one parliamentarian said the session did not add anything new to what he already knows about the peace process.

"The session did not add anything new... it did not reveal more than you read at newspapers," said Islamic Action Front (IAF) Deputy Hammani Said.

"The session was comprehensive, and (Dr. Majali's) answers were frank," said a member of the independent bloc in the House, Abdul Razzaq Tubehat.

Sources said that in his statement, Dr. Majali reiterated Jordan's commitment to a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and explained the basic principles that govern Jordan's policy on the peace process.

House Speaker Taher Al Masi'ri told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Dr. Majali also focused on Jordanian-Palestinian relations and gave a thorough description of the draft economic agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Sources said Dr. Majali told the House that there were no differences between the Kingdom and the PLO, and the draft agreement on economic relations, which was drafted in September and revised in October and November, was not signed because the PLO was preoccupied with other issues.

Sources said Dr. Majali told the House that the PLO explained its position to Jordan and requested the delay in signing the draft agreement, which was reached in Amman.

Deputies said the House and the government would resume their debate of the peace process at an unspecified date so that deputies can respond to Dr. Majali.

The "general discussion," during which Dr. Majali also briefed deputies on the outcome of the visit of Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, was requested by lawmakers earlier this month after they described as common knowledge a briefing given by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan.

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Vatican, Israel approve accord on diplomatic ties

VATICAN CITY (Agencies) — An Israeli-Vatican committee Wednesday approved a basic agreement on establishing bilateral diplomatic relations which is to be signed in occupied Jerusalem Thursday, said a joint communication released by the Vatican.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro said the statement welcomed "the important result" reached during working sessions since July 1992 as well as the climate of "sincere cooperation" and "mutual trust" which marked them.

The committee session, held at the Vatican, was chaired by Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin and his Vatican counterpart Claudio Celli.

The last working session before the Thursday signing ceremony consisted of a point by point scrutiny of the preamble, the 15 articles of the agreement and its protocol on the diplomatic status of the special representatives of the two sides are to exchange, Mr. Navarro said.

Once the Israeli parliament and the Vatican authorities ratify the agreement, diplomats will be exchanged at ambassadorial and papal nuncio level, according to article

14. The document, the most important step in Israeli-Vatican relations since the Jewish state was founded in 1948, was given final approval by delegations which had worked on the accord for 17 months.

The new relations are expected to make it easier for Pope John Paul II to accept standing invitations by Israeli government and Jewish religious leaders to visit the Holy Land.

The Vatican has previously recognised the right of the Jewish state to exist within secure borders.

But it first wanted progress on the Palestinian question and guarantees for Jerusalem as a city sacred to the three great monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — before agreeing to full diplomatic recognition.

These wider issues were left to the Middle East peace talks in Washington while the delegations worked on bilateral issues.

Spokesman Navarro said the accord may make it easier for the Vatican to play a greater role in constructing Middle East peace.

In the preamble, the Vatican and Israel agree on the singular character and universal significance of the Holy Land.

But in one important article, the Vatican states that while the Catholic Church reserves the right to speak out on moral issues, it agrees not to become directly involved in conflicts.

The agreement says this principle applies specifically to "disputed territories and unsettled borders."

In the same article, both sides commit themselves to support peaceful resolutions to local or world conflicts and to condemn terrorism.

Fahd opens Shura Council, reaffirms adherence to Sharia

RIYADH (Agencies) — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia Wednesday inaugurated the Kingdom's first representative assembly in 60 years as part of long-promised political reforms.

He vowed to continue the path of construction and development and asserted the kingdom's determination "to carry on with our righteous Islamic teachings."

"The government system is based on Islamic laws so the system of the Shura Council is based in all its contexts on the basic principles of Islam," the king said.

"We are confident that this council will be... of help to the government to achieve what we aspire of good and prosperity for the country and the citizens," he added.

The members of the 60-man Shura (consultative) Council, all appointed by King Fahd, took oath Tuesday.

At the swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday, the king said: "This country is attached to the Sharia (Islamic law), in the letter and in the spirit, and accepts nothing that is not in conformity with Islamic faith."

The Sharia is "among the best systems in the world" in all fields, even if there are no Western-style elections in Saudi Arabia, he said, quoted by the official Saudi Press Agency.

King Fahd said his country did not interfere in other peo-

Syria rejects Israeli call to halt resistance

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria Wednesday dismissed an Israeli appeal to stop the fiercest guerrilla attacks on Israeli troops in South Lebanon for five months.

Resistance against occupation was legitimate, the official daily Al Baath said.

It condemned Israeli air raids against Lebanon and said they showed that the Jewish state did not want peace. The attacks will continue, it added.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Tuesday that Syria, the main powerbroker in Lebanon, was not doing enough to stop the guerrilla attacks.

"We don't find it strange at all to see Rabin repeating from the occupied land of the south his false accusations against Syria under illogical pretexts," Al Baath said.

"He wants to stop national resistance operations ignoring the fact that they are a legitimate right for any people whose land is occupied."

Hizbollah guerrillas mounted more attacks on Wednesday in the "security zone" Israeli troops occupy in South Lebanon, drawing fierce retaliatory fire.

Israeli planes on Tuesday raided Hizbollah posts on the Iqlim Al Toufah ridge and the guerrillas hit back with rocket salvos on Marjayoun, where Israeli forces and their Lebanese militia allies have headquarters, and military positions.

Security sources said eight hit-and-run assaults were

mounted from dusk Tuesday to dawn Wednesday behind barbed wire and Katyusha rockets that rained down on the "security zone's central and eastern sectors.

Israeli troops and surrogate militiamen of the South Lebanon Army responded with howitzer and tank barrages on villages straddling the occupied border enclave, the sources said.

The Hizbollah group said Wednesday three of its guerrillas were killed in Tuesday's Israeli air raids.

Security sources had said at least two guerrillas were killed and three wounded in three air attacks on Hizbollah positions in Iqlim Al Toufah ridge.

The Hizbollah statement did not give any number of the wounded.

The fighting is the worst on the most volatile Arab-Israeli frontline since a seven-day Israeli air and artillery offensive last July.

Al Baath said guerrilla operations would continue until the south of Lebanon was liberated from Israeli occupation.

"Withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands is a condition for achieving peace. Without it the region will never witness security and stability," it said.

"There is no doubt that the series of savage raids launched by Israel against unarmed civilians is part of an aggressive policy which gives more evidence about Rabin's rejection of all efforts aimed at achieving peace."

Middle East News

Qadhafi: West knows who 'real' Pan Am bombers are

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan leader Moammar Qadhafi Tuesday insisted that a reported change in statements by a key witness had proved Libya's innocence in the 1988 bombing of a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland.

But an authoritative source here said the government was nonetheless ready to have two Libyans — suspected in the bombing of London and Washington — stand trial in any country but Britain and the United States.

Colonel Qadhafi in a televised speech charged that the United States, Britain and France "know full well who was responsible" for the destruction of the airliner.

"They accuse Libya because they got their price," from the real culprits, "whereas from Libya they have gotten nothing."

The United States and Britain have charged two Libyans in the mid-air explosion, which killed 270 people, and have demanded their extradition to face trial.

Libya has refused and is currently under United Nations economic sanctions as a result.

In his remarks Tuesday, delivered at Ujaylat, 100 kilometres west of here, Col. Qadhafi cited reports that a major witness in the case had altered previous statements.

In an interview with the Sunday Times newspaper in Britain on Dec. 19, Edwin Bollier, director of a small Swiss electronics firm, contradicted an earlier account in which he said he had only supplied Libya with the type of timing device used in the Lockerbie bomb.

Mr. Bollier told the Sunday Times he had also sold the device to the former East Germany, whose secret police had links with the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) led by Ahmad Jibril.

Mr. Jibril's group was initially suspected in the bombing, before the world's attention switched to Libya.

With the change in statement, Col. Qadhafi stressed, the United States, Britain and France "appeared to all the world as liars...exploiting a terrible accident to settle their political scores" with Tripoli.

The United Nations has also demanded that Libya cooperate with a French inquiry into an explosion aboard a DC-10 over Niger in 1989 that killed 170 and in which four Libyans are wanted for questioning.

In a related development Tuesday, an authoritative source reported here that the government was prepared to hand over the two Libyan suspects for trial anywhere but in the United States or Britain.

He said Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntasser had urged United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali to convince the United States, Britain and France to accept the Libyan proposal to for a trial in a third country.

Dr. Ghali's spokesman, Joe Sills, said Monday in New York that the Libyan ambassador in F. J.ing, Muftah Hadi, had delivered the request during the secretary-general's visit to China.

Earlier this month Col. Qadhafi had gone back on his demand for a trial in a third country, saying the two suspects, Abdul Basset Al Megrahi and Al Amin: Khalifa Fhima, "will be judged in Libya only."



ANTI-PEACE PROTESTS: Jewish settlers Tuesday night burn a Palestinian flag near Orient House, the headquarters of the Palestinian peace talks delegation in East Jerusalem. The Israeli

supreme court rejected a request by the settlers to hold a large demonstration outside Orient House (AFP photo)

Talabani accuses Iran of instigating Kurdish violence

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Recent fighting among Kurdish factions in northern Iraq has revealed that Iran — not Iraq — is most active in seeking to undermine stability in the Kurdish "safe haven," a Kurdish leader says.

Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), also said in an interview here that the fighting has torn apart the Iraqi opposition and diminished its effectiveness.

"The Iraqi regime cannot move in fear of the protection provided by the international presence...and also in fear of a possible Kurdish resistance," Mr. Talabani told the Associated Press Tuesday.

Mr. Talabani said Iran supported Muslim fundamentalists in this month's offensive against the PUK in the Kurdish enclave, which is protected by British, French and U.S. warplanes enforcing a "no-fly" zone.

Mr. Talabani said his group had achieved an overwhelming victory after recapturing bases taken by the Islamic Movement in Kurdistan (IMK) and overtaking their headquarters and other key positions.

Islamic fighters throughout Kurdistan have been disarmed by PUK fighters, he added. "Hundreds of the Islamic

Movement fighters have joined the Patriotic Union, others have surrendered and a number have fled to Iran," Mr. Talabani said.

He refused to disclose casualty estimates, except to say that many innocent lives were lost in the fighting that the PUK says the fundamentalists started on Dec. 18.

The PUK and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), although historical rivals, now form a coalition to govern the Kurdish area, which functions as an effectively independent state.

The veteran Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), although historical rivals, now form a coalition to govern the Kurdish area, which functions as an effectively independent state.

The veteran Kurdish leader said that after the fighting his troops uncovered documentation "clearly showing the strong ties" between Tehran and the Islamic Movement. He did not elaborate.

Mr. Talabani accused the fundamentalists of starting the clashes by attacking PUK positions, setting fire to them and killing a number of its members.

PUK offers of a peaceful dialogue to overcome the differences went unanswered, he said.

"Our fighters were forced to resort to their right of self-defence to restore the occupied positions and chase the responsible persons for punishment," he added.

Mr. Talabani said the events of recent weeks had damaged the Iraqi opposition.

"There is no unity in the forces of the opposition," he said. "Any event that has the aspect of fighting will damage the Iraqi opposition."

Asked if the United States and Europe have fulfilled their promises of humanitarian aid to the Iraqi Kurds, Mr. Talabani appeared grateful.

"Tens of millions of dollars have been allocated to secure these humanitarian requirements which have helped a large number of Kurds survive famine."

Mr. Talabani denied that reports of a new attempt to assassinate Saddam Hussein were true, but refused to comment further on the subject.

KDP leader Mawdud Barzani Tuesday blamed the IMK for instigating the clashes but also criticised the PUK for launching attacks within the Kurdish towns of Sulaymaniyeh and Erbil.

In Baghdad, official newspapers also accused neighbouring countries of stirring up trouble in northern Iraq.

Saddam escaped bomb — reports

LONDON (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein escaped a bomb attack last September that may have been planned by one of his closest aides, possibly in collusion with the United States, reports say.

The British daily the Times, quoting well placed Iraqi sources, said President Saddam, 56, escaped injury in a bomb attack on a convoy in which he was travelling to a meeting with some of his advisors arranged only a few hours beforehand.

The advisors were virtually the only people to know about the meeting and included Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan, Defence Minister Ali Hassan Al Majid and the head of President Saddam's bodyguards, Rashad Amin.

One of his bodyguards was wounded in the attack on the seven vehicle convoy, according to the report.

All those who took part in the meeting have been questioned, the Times said, but added that "Saddam may not necessarily suspect them, although he is even suspicious of his mother, but it could be their aides or a leak in telecommunications."

Opposition groups have said they were not involved in the attack, and an Iraqi source quoted by the paper added: "The suspicion in Baghdad is that the plot was hatched within the regime possibly with American support."

The source said: "It is puzzling the government because it thought the Americans would leave Saddam alone, especially now he is complying with some of the U.N.'s demands."

In October the Sunday Times reported that Iraqi opposition members had planned to attack President Saddam on July 17, when the president was due to take part in a military procession.

They tried to win U.S. backing for the plot but without success, the Sunday Times said. The plot was uncovered and hundreds of officers were arrested and questioned.

The Associated Press re-

ported that at least 60 senior military, police and government officials have been detained and interrogated in a wide-ranging investigation led by President Saddam's youngest son, Qusai, 28, who heads the presidential intelligence apparatus.

The AP said unconfirmed reports said 20 army officers, some senior, have been executed since the Sept. 24 attack. As far as is known, it is the first in which suspicion has fallen on members of Saddam's inner circle, it said in a Nicosia-dated story.

"No one is being spared in the intense security probe that is still underway," one particularly knowledgeable traveller told the AP.

The sources said attack has sent shock waves through the regime and undermined confidence in President Saddam's security at a time when even the minority Sunni Muslim sect, long a pillar of the ruling apparatus, is showing signs of growing disenchantment after three years of U.N. trade sanctions.

President Saddam himself and his eldest son, Qusai, have also been involved in the interrogations, the sources said.

They said President Saddam's assailants detonated a roadside bomb in Baghdad's northeastern outskirts as his motorcade passed, according to the AP.

The explosives were hidden in a rusted broken-down tractor abandoned a year ago beside the highway running through Umm Al Bazazeen, a district of orchards and gardens, the sources reported.

The president, riding in a black, armoured Mercedes-Benz limousine that was the fourth in a seven-vehicle convoy, was not hurt, they said. One of his bodyguards was wounded.

President Saddam was on his way to a hastily arranged meeting with senior aides, including Mr. Ramadan, Mr. Aziz, Mr. Majid and Mr. Amin, when the attack took place, the sources said.

They said that only a handful of officials knew about the meeting called only hours before by President Saddam.

Syria said issuing exit visas to Jews

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Syria has recently issued exit visas to Syrian Jews after President Hafez Al Assad promised his country would do so in early December, a State Department official said Tuesday.

"We've seen some progress over the last few weeks...in the issuance of travel documents," said an official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He refused to give any details, such as how many exit visas had been granted.

At a nearly four-hour meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher Dec. 5, Mr. Assad pledged to issue exit visas to all remaining Syrian Jews by the end of the month.

At that time U.S. officials said they estimated that of the 1,200 or so Jews who remain in Syria, 800 to 850 of them had not been given visas that would permit them to leave the country should they choose to do so.

Last February, on Mr. Christopher's first visit to Damascus as secretary of state, Mr. Assad made a similar commitment that was not fulfilled.

Syrian-Israeli peace talks have been stalled since September, principally over the future of the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau which Israel seized in 1967. Syria wants a total Israeli withdrawal but Israel will not say how much it will vacate until Syria makes a commitment to a total peace.

Mr. Christopher said early this month that President Bill Clinton and Mr. Assad will meet in Geneva in mid-January to "reinvigorate" the Middle East peace process.

The announcement of the meeting came after Syria made goodwill gestures on the issues of Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon and on the exit visas for Syrian Jews.

Members of the Jewish community in Syria confirmed Tuesday that hundreds of Jews have been given exit visas to leave. Syria in a gesture by President Assad before his summit with President Clinton.

Algerian poet murdered after FIS vow of violence

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Armed men killed poet and writer Youssef Sebti Tuesday at a farm where he lived, while a Muslim fundamentalist leader called on Islamic fighters to continue their holy war, rebuffing offers for dialogue.

Abdul Razak Radjam, head of the Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS) information commission, also asked fighters to unify their ranks to bring about a quick victory over Algeria's military-backed regime.

Security forces said Sebti's throat was slashed at a farm next to the agronomy institute where he worked in the eastern suburb of Al Harrach.

Sebti, 46, part of a group of surrealist poets, wrote cultural chronicles for Algiers newspapers.

He was the 18th member of Algeria's intellectual and journalistic community killed since March. Authorities have in the past blamed Islamic radicals for such assassinations.

Meanwhile, the front's Radjam, in a communiqué received in Paris, exhorted fighters to continue their holy war, saying paradise awaits those

who die in battle.

The communiqué, received by the French news agency, Agence France Presse, was the most trenchant of several responses to recent offers of dialogue by authorities seeking a way out of the crisis. A spiral of violence has left more than 2,000 people dead in two years. Twenty-three foreigners have been killed since late September.

Earlier this month, a group of six FIS founding members recently accepted dialogue on condition that jailed leaders be freed. Then, Rabah Kebir, front spokesman in exile in Germany, set five conditions for dialogue, including trial for those responsible for repression against fundamentalists.

In the communiqué, dated Dec. 22, Mr. Radjam called on fighters "to continue the jihad because God has promised victory to the nation of the jihad and promised paradise to martyrs of the jihad."

He asked fighting groups, known to be splintered into numerous factions, to "unify their ranks under a single banner."

Socialist activist killed in Sanaa

ADEN (Agencies) — A young member of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) has been murdered in the capital city Sanaa, the party announced here.

Abdul Latif Saad Al Ruzaini, "a young student and a dynamic party worker," was killed last Thursday, the 151st member of the YSP to be murdered since 1990, the party added.

The YSP blamed "treacherous hands" for the killing but did not elaborate.

Yemen for the past four months has been in political crisis, caused by conflict between President Ali Abdullah Saleh, general secretary of the northern-based General People's Congress, and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh, leader of the YSP and a southerner.

Mr. Beedh has been entrenched in the southern city of Aden since August 19, demanding that decentralisation be implemented as a condition for returning to Sanaa.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arab ministers to meet in Tunis on drugs

TUNIS (R) — Arab interior ministers will meet in Tunis early in January to discuss plans to combat illegal drugs, officials said. The three-day conference from Jan. 4 to 6 will discuss a draft convention on the subject, said Ahmad Al Salem, secretary general of the Tunis-based Arab Interior Ministers Council. "No single Arab country can tackle the problem alone, and this can be successfully achieved only by joint Arab cooperation," Mr. Salem said in a statement. The agenda also includes an Arab strategy plan and an information plan for combating narcotics, he added.

20,000 Israelis killed in traffic since 1948

TEL AVIV (AP) — About 20,000 Israelis have been killed in traffic accidents since the 1948 founding of Israel, newspaper reports said. By comparison, 17,700 soldiers have fallen in the state's wars and battles in the past 45 years. Israel has a population of 5.3 million people. The reports said nearly 490 Israelis were killed in 1993, compared to 56 Israeli soldiers and civilians slain that year in attacks linked to the uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Iran claims 5 killed in rebel fighting

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran said Tuesday that at least five "top members" of a leading dissident group have been killed in internal fighting. The claim was denied by the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq as another attempt to discredit the group. "The mujaheds are delicious and are fabricating this story," the Mujahedeen spokesman Ali Safavi said by telephone. According to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency, the deaths occurred when disaffected Mujahedeen members attacked a rebel base in southern Iraq on Dec. 15. IRNA said it heard about the attack on Saturday from an unidentified Mujahedeen deserter. The news agency characterised the attack as part of internal opposition — vehemently denied by the Mujahedeen — against the Baghdad-based group's cooperation with Iraqi authorities. It said more than 100 rockets hit a three-story building which housed the Mujahedeen rebels, killing five people and wounding "many others." The Iranian dispatch did not identify the victims. IRNA quoted the deserter as saying the base housed Mehdi Abrismachi, the divorced husband of Maryam Qajar Azondolou, herself a former wife of Mujahedeen leader Masoud Rajavi.

Park to replace Tehran red-light zone

NICOSIA (R) — The city of Tehran has launched a \$57 million project to build an amusement park, sports complex and cultural centre at the site of a red-light district razed in 1985, Iranian television reported. Work had started on what would be the capital's biggest amusement park in the 32-hectare Jamsheed district that once was a cluster of rundown brothels and opium dens, it said. The mayor of Tehran's 11th district said on television that much of the project's estimated cost of 100 billion rials (\$57 million) had been allocated and it would be completed in three years if the rest of the funds could be secured. Apart from the amusement park, the complex would include a museum, a library, art and craft workshops, outdoor and indoor sport facilities for men and women and a 2,000-car parking lot, he said. Jamsheed district in south Tehran, named after the main street running through it, was torn down nine years after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution. Its rehabilitation is part of a series of urban renovation projects in poorer southern sections of Tehran.

Botched hostage rescue shocks Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — President Gl'cos Clerides has ordered an inquiry to find out what went wrong when elite anti-terrorist units shot dead a hostage they were trying to rescue on Christmas eve. The botched operation, which also killed the abductor, her fiancée, has shocked the inhabitants of this island, where violent crime is virtually unheard of. Television news and analysis programmes nightly have been running and rerunning footage of the bloody scene in the west coast resort of Paphos. The footage shows a five-member team of the MMAD anti-terrorist force storming an apartment where Eleftherios Andronicou, 34, was holding his 22-year-old fiancée, Esi Constantinou, and attempting to kill her. Neighbours had summoned police the same night after hearing a noisy quarrel and the woman's cries for help. Early reports said she was killed by her boyfriend, who was armed with a shotgun. But a medical examiners report later established that both died by police fire. The report said 20 bullets were found in the man's body and three in the woman's. A police statement said one policeman was wounded slightly in the shoulder by shotgun pellets apparently fired by Andronicou. On Monday, Mr. Clerides ordered the inquiry to be headed by Supreme Court president Andreas Loizou.

Police seize heroin in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — Police in Turkey seized 68 kilograms of heroin Tuesday and arrested a truck driver after finding the drug hidden under crates of hazel nuts bound for the Netherlands, Anatolia news agency reported. Security officials, quoted by Anatolia, said the Turkish driver's truck was searched by customs police at the Kapikule border crossing point into Bulgaria.

Bombs explode at Turkish party building

ANKARA (R) — Two bombs exploded at an office belonging to Turkey's ruling True Path Party Tuesday, wounding four people, Anatolia news agency reported. The bombs, thrown by an unidentified attacker, wounded a guard, two party officials and a doorman and caused material damage at the building in Ankara's residential district of Anitpate, it said. No one claimed responsibility for the attack but the Marxist group Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left) has carried out similar attacks on security and political targets in big cities. Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's centre-right True Path Party is the senior partner in a coalition government which has ruled the country for two years.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Taratara
18:00 News in French
19:15 Reconstr
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Family Matters
21:00 Art of Will
22:00 News in English
22:30 Film "The Adventures of The Wilderness Family"

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fajr
06:30 Sunrise
12:30 Dhuhr
15:30 Asr
18:30 Maghrib
19:30 Isha

CHURCHES

Church of the Annunciation Church Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771531
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assyrian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Clouds will appear at different altitudes with a chance of scattered showers and winds will be southerly to moderate. In Amman, it will be cloudy with a chance of showers, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./max. temp. 9/19

Amman 13/24

Agaba 13/24

Deserts 7/20

Jordan Valley 12/23

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Mohammad Al Ghoul 790730
Dr. Jamal Al Ja'fari 790460
Dr. Youssef Nasr 751144
Dr. Khalid Al Asfar 666873
First pharmacy 661912
First pharmacy 678356
Al Azima pharmacy 637855
Nagroukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 634731
Nagroukh pharmacy 644945
Shawqani pharmacy 637664
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID: Dr. Mohammad Al Hiti 279773

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA: Dr. Rajeh Saqr 901290

Khashm pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Municipality 787111
Garage 787111
Telephone 787111
(direct assistance) 121
Overseas Cable 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Jordan Electricity Repair 661101
Radio Jordan 773111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Alkhil Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushtak Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdal 6615757
Al-Ahli, Abdal 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA: Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarga National Hospital (09)900560

Queen Alia Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909390

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Green Catholic Hospital (02)27275

Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

06:30 Aden (RJ)

07:10 Sanaa (RJ)

07:30 New Delhi (RJ)

08:25 Agaba (RJ)

08:30 Agaba (RJ)

10:30 Riyadh (RJ)

10:35 Beirut (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:00 London, Berlin (RJ)

18:15 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

18:30 London, Berlin (RJ)

19:30 Athens (RJ)

20:00 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

20:00 Rome (RJ)

23:45 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:00 Riyadh (SU)

16:45 Dubai (EM)

17:35 Rome (AZ)

Home News

RSS, British Royal Society discuss scientific cooperation

AMMAN — Dr. Hani Mulki, secretary general of the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) and president of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Wednesday received Sir Michael (Francis) Atiyah, president of the British Royal Society, who is currently on a visit to Jordan. Present at the meeting were Mr. Husni Ayesh, former member of the Upper House of Parliament, Dr. Sa'ad Alloush, RSS vice president and Dr. Mohammad Halaiga, HCST assistant secretary general.

At the outset of the meeting, Dr. Mulki presented a briefing on RSS duties and objectives, in its capacity as a national institution for research and industrial services, pointing out that RSS activities concentrate on three major areas, namely applied research of developmental nature, standards and specifications and technical training.

Dr. Mulki added that RSS concentrated in the past years on preparing specialised technical training programmes to meet the needs of Jordan and the Arab region for specialised technical cadres.

He added that Princess Sumaya University College for Technology was established in order to attain this objective, and it now grants the bachelor degree in computer science and electronics engineering.

Dr. Alloush talked about RSS centres and departments, noting that scientific research as well as technical consultations and services which RSS undertakes are compatible with the development process and the requirements of industry in the Kingdom.

Dr. Halaiga presented a briefing on HCST duties, with regard to coordination of scientific research efforts and providing financial support to some research and development activities in the Kingdom.

The two sides discussed means to further develop scientific cooperation between the Jordanian and British scientific institutions in the interest of both.

Dr. Atiyah toured some RSS laboratories and praised the scientific progress of RSS. He also underlined his readiness to develop scientific relations between the two countries and look for new spheres of cooperation.

Dr. Atiyah later visited the Educational Research and Development Centre where he met with its president, Dr. Victor Billeh, and the National Information Centre, where he met Dr. Youssef Nusair, acting director of the centre. He was briefed on the activities and the objectives of the two centres.

Housing Corporation survey shows few people can afford buying land

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Youssef Hiyasat has stressed the need for enacting a new legislation allowing the partitioning of big plots of land into smaller ones to enable low and limited income people to buy such plots and build their own houses.

During a meeting attended by Greater Amman Mayor Mandouh Al Abbadi, Dr. Hiyasat said the corporation had carried out a survey of residential plots of land in Zarqa, Irbid and Greater Amman to see where housing projects for limited and low-income citizens could be implemented.

He said the study pointed out that a little less than 40 per cent of the population cannot

buy land under the current circumstances. This requires that small plots of land be made available to the largest number of population.

Studies on national housing strategies carried out in 1991 showed an imbalance in urban land. It revealed severe shortage of plots affordable by limited and low income population, while there was a big supply of urban plots of land classified under the A and B categories, which only wealthy people can afford buying.

The studies showed that at least 25 per cent of the population cannot afford buying plots of land of an area of 250 square metres, which is the minimum area that can be classified under the D group.



QUEEN NOOR in Ramtha: Her Majesty Queen Noor visited the district of Ramtha Wednesday, during which she patronised celebrations commemorating His Majesty King Hussein's 58th birthday. The Queen visited Al Ramtha Charitable Society, which provides medical and social care for 90 handicapped and orphaned children. The society, which was established in 1965, also organises cultural activities and has a training centre for handicraft productions, such as sewing and tricot. The Queen opened an exhibition of handicapped productions by the centre and discussed ways of marketing these products and improving the standards of the available facilities. Queen Noor later visited Al Hassan Industrial City, where she opened two exhibitions. The first, organised by the Centre for Fine Arts in Ramtha, was an exhibition of paintings and photographs of the Hashemite Family and of modern Jordan. The second was an exhibition of national products by companies located at the industrial city. On display were products

such as ceramics, handicrafts, plastics, furniture and foot stuffs, some of which are exported to Arab countries, and the United States. Finally, the Queen attended performances by various local artists to commemorate His Majesty's birthday. The performances, which were held at the industrial city's theatre, included folkloric dances, national songs and poem recitals. Following the celebrations, the Queen distributed the district's shields to distinguished members of the locality who have contributed to the prosperity of the Ramtha community. During her visit to Ramtha, Queen Noor also visited the border control posts between Jordan and Syria. The Queen toured the premises and was briefed on its department's operations and the available facilities. Receiving Queen Noor upon arrival were the governor of Irbid, the district officer of Ramtha, the director of the borders and the chief of police. The Queen was accompanied by Ina'm Mufti, the development and planning advisor to Her Majesty Queen Noor.

Customs Department to implement 'harmonised system'

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Customs Department Director-General Mohammad Al Jamal Wednesday announced that Jordan will start implementing the "harmonised commodity description and coding system" on Jan. 1, 1994.

Mr. Al Jamal explained at a news conference that the harmonised system is an international and advanced register that classifies and assigns goods according to fixed, scientific bases.

The harmonised system, he elaborated, is a multipurpose 6-digit nomenclature and a structured nomenclature based on a series of subdivided 4-digit headings.

"There is no connection between the harmonised system and the customs duties categories," Mr. Al Jamal pointed out, "as every country has the freedom to impose customs duties according to its own economic, financial and social considerations and circumstances."

According to the customs chief, the harmonised system was launched on the basis of an international accord which was signed by about 80 coun-

tries comprising industrial nations and most Arab states, including Jordan.

The harmonised system "aims to facilitate international trade and to analyse and compare the resulting statistics. It aims as well to simplify trade documents and transfer data."

Other goals include the possibility of utilising the register for shipping, postal and transport purposes and showing accurate and comparable data for commercial negotiations and other related purposes.

Mr. Al Jamal noted that the harmonised system has a wider distribution of goods into subdivisions and, as such, it comprises a total of 5,019 separate groups of items while under the present register, there are only 1,011 categories.

Such a large breakdown, which entailed a 6-digit coding system for each group of goods, would facilitate computer programming and would clearly name each product to help avoid any ambiguity and disputes on tariff rates.

Another advantage of the harmonised system is its flexibility, as it allows adding

new items or eliminating others without causing any structural damage.

Mr. Al Jamal said specialised technical committees were formed at the Customs Department to stay in touch with the Customs Cooperation Council in Brussels to ensure the uniform interpretation and application of the harmonised system.

He added that 200 employees from the Customs Department had been given theoretical and practical training and are now fully prepared to work with the new system at all customs centres.

"We have also coordinated with the Department of Statistics to adopt this new system as a statistical register to classify the goods scientifically," the customs director-general said.

He stressed that under the new system, customs procedures will be greatly simplified and quickened as both suppliers and buyers can refer to a single product classification quoted everywhere in the world.

He pointed out that the harmonised system, being very accurate, would help prepare studies on changes in tariffs, if needed.

Government said to freeze new subsidised food system

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government appears to have frozen plans to introduce a new system of coupons which will limit the availability of food subsidies to people who get a monthly income of less than JD 500, official sources said Wednesday.

The Ministry of Supply had been studying the issue for several months in a bid to ensure that food subsidies reach only those who really need them but found that no mechanism was sound enough to maintain such a formula, they said.

"It has been a long-held theory by the Ministry of Supply that the idea was not feasible and it seems that the prophecy has come true," said a senior official source.

No formal comment was available from any official. Under the formula which was studied, the Ministry of Supply was to have limited the issuance of coupons for subsidised rice, sugar and milk powder to people who could prove through documents their income was less than JD 500 a month.

But many hurdles cropped up, including an ambiguity over whether to consider individual income or family income and the number of members of the family as the main parameter to decide whether the recipient of the coupon deserved the subsidies or not, according to the sources.

"It would have been a herculean task, involving a lot of red tape and bureaucracy before it could be established whether an individual is in need of government

support," said one source. "It would have involved more staff and more work, which, in the end, was not likely to have the desired effect."

However, the ministry has only frozen the plan and could dust it off when it finds that the time is opportune to introduce the system, the sources said.

Proponents of the system argue that it would be a good move since only those who stood in actual need would go through the labourious exercise of obtaining the necessary documents and endure the bureaucratic procedures before it is established that they deserve the subsidy.

But critics point out the administrative and bureaucratic procedures involved in determining the qualifying status of each recipient and say the result would not be worth the effort.

There are not enough people in Jordan who earn more than JD 500 a month to make the effort worthwhile," was the dry comment of a source, who noted that the government was the biggest employer in the country, but government employees earning more than JD 500 a month would not run into more than a few thousands.

"By and large, private sector employees who earn more than JD 500 a month do not bother to collect their coupons," the source observed, adding that he was not overlooking the possibilities that subsidy coupons unused by deserving beneficiaries could also end up in the hands of profiteers.

Regardless of the approach to subsidies, the government has repeatedly affirmed that no step would be taken that

would have any negative effect on the poor and needy.

Reducing government subsidies through ensuring that they only reach those who deserve them and eliminating abuse is part of the economic restructuring programme that Jordan is implementing under the supervision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Under the programme, implemented since 1989, the Kingdom has cut food subsidies by half. In 1990, subsidies totalled more than JD 60 million while the allocation for subsidies in the 1994 draft budget is only JD 30 million — down from JD 36 million in 1993.

The bulk of the allocation goes to subsidised wheat, which the government imports at international prices and distributes to bakeries to process into bread and sell at controlled prices.

The government is resisting IMF pressure to cut subsidies for water, particularly for the agricultural sector. The IMF argument is that the sector could not be developed to a level at which farmers could contribute positively to economy if they are subsidised.

The World Bank is currently studying means to improve the efficiency of the agricultural sector prior to any government move to cut the subsidies. The study is expected to produce a \$70 million to \$80 million World Bank loan matched with a similar loan from an as-yet undetermined source to develop the sector.

In addition, the World Bank is also extending \$7 million in assistance to modernise the marketing of agricultural produce.

Status of Jerusalem not negotiable — Najjar

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Clearing last minute obstacles, the Holy See and Israel are today due to sign a fundamental agreement, a Declaration of Principles which the two parties have worked out in discussions on bilateral relations since July 29, 1992, according to a statement by the Right Rev. Monsignor Raouf Najjar — Jordan representative of the Apostolic Delegation.

Monsignor Najjar told the Jordan Times that preparation of the document was worked out by a joint commission led by Dr. Yossi Beilin, the Israeli deputy minister for foreign affairs, and Claudio Celli, under-secretary of the Holy See's Section of the Secretariat of State for Relations with States.

He said that the document amounts to an international treaty between sovereign entities, noting that the two sides may proceed to full diplomatic relations as some sort of ties have always existed between the state of Israel and the Holy See since Israel's establishment in 1948. Relations started following the U.N. recognition of the state of Israel, in November of 1947, according to Msgr. Najjar.

He said that the fundamental agreement is basically a mutual reaffirmation of rights and principles to which both parties adhere, and most of its causes are taken directly from the Universal Declaration on Human Rights while others are related more specifically to the rights and duties resulting from the unique character of an area of the world which was the cradle of all

three major monotheistic religions, reaffirming the respect for the holy places for the city of Jerusalem. Whoever exercises sovereignty over the city, whether independently or jointly, must give assurances, to be internationally guaranteed, concerning respect for the holy places, the rights of the religious communities, the freedom of worship, the freedom of access of the faithful and whatever else might refer to the respect and care for the religious, historical, cultural and archaeological value of Jerusalem and of the holy land, in general, in reference to all three monotheistic religions, which consider Jerusalem to be a city unique in all the world.

Upon signing the fundamental agreement, the Holy See and the state of Israel will exchange special representatives, who will personally enjoy all the rights and privileges given to Apostolic Nuncios and ambassadors, and this in preparation for future full diplomatic relations to be established in the traditional manner, as laid down in the Vienna Convention Art. 2.

The agreement said: "As to whether or not this agreement will clear the way for a visit by the Pope to Israel and Jerusalem, one can only answer that it is bound to improve chances for such a trip. The holy father has repeatedly expressed his desire to come as a pilgrim of peace to the Middle East. A papal visit to Lebanon during the celebration of the Synod of the Catholic Church in Lebanon is already planned for 1994. But to date, there are no specific plans or possible dates for a visit by the Pope to the Holy Land."

However, the position of the Holy See regarding Jerusalem must now be recast in the framework of the ongoing peace talks and direct discussions between the Palestinians and Israelis. And it is in this



RJ HONOURS BEST EMPLOYEES: The national air carrier, the Royal Jordanian (RJ), Tuesday held a reception to honour its exceptional employees. At the ceremony, Chief Executive Officer of RJ Mahmoud Jamal Balqaz delivered an address in which he thanked the employees and commended their efforts, calling on their colleagues to follow their lead in improving RJ's services. The employees were selected by their various departments in appreciation of their distinguished efforts during 1993. RJ hosts such a ceremony every year to give an incentive to its personnel to excel in offering services to RJ's customers.

Meeting reviews progress work at Amal Cancer Centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Out of JD 8,016,472 raised through contributions from the public, a total of JD 2.25 million has been spent on the construction of Al Amal Cancer Centre near the University of Jordan, according to Ahmad Rabeah Ghneim, head of committee in charge of the centre's finances.

Addressing a meeting held at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) to review progress at the project, Mr. Ghneim said that a drive to raise contributions from the Jordanian public, which started in 1984, resulted in contributions far greater than the sum, but many of the donors have failed to honour their pledges so far.

Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib, head of the national team in charge of the centre, at the meeting, which was chaired by CBJ governor Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi, presented a review of the progress of work on the JD 17 million project since September this year until the end of the last month. This included results a meeting with

the Director of Amman Office of the World Health Organisation (WHO) which discuss prospects of cooperation between the cancer centre and WHO in spreading information about prevention measures against cancer and organising seminars, training courses and workshops for the benefit of collecting information against cancer.

He said that agreement was reached on providing the national team with a booklet related to the basic by laws of the centre during a two-week period, before introducing amendments to it.

Raef Nijem, head of the Technical Committee, outlined the measure taken on the expansion of the centre, which started in October 1992, noting that the centre's project would be completed by the end of April 1994.

The national committee services would be offered to the needy and patients free of charge.

Brother kills sister, drops nephew in the street

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Zarqa police have revealed a murder case which involves the divorced mother of a reportedly missing child.

Zarqa police have detained a suspect in connection with a crime that was committed two weeks ago and involved a wandering child whose whereabouts had been advertised in the local papers by the police on Dec. 15. The two-year-old was found in the Zarqa streets on his own.

Police sources said that after placing the advertisement with the boy's picture in local newspapers, a Zarqa citizen was able to identify the boy and told police that he knew the child lived with his father abroad.

Acting on the information from the witness, police started investigating the case and learned that the brother of the mother had committed the crime.

A police source told the Jordan Times the brother confessed to having killed his sister because she was frequently leaving the house

without his knowledge and he suspected she was seeing somebody. That made him kill her.

The brother, who has not been identified, told the police that on Dec. 10, he killed her. He went with his sister (the victim) by the Zarqa stream and after an argument about her suspected behaviour he picked a sharp object and hit the victim with it several times on her head. This caused her death. The suspect then buried his sister at the scene of the crime and took the two-year-old child to the city market in Zarqa and left him there. He was later picked up by the police.

According to a police official in Zarqa, the child is being held at a child care centre in Zarqa until the investigations are over.

Three people killed
Meanwhile, three people died in separate accidents Tuesday. In Irbid, a 37-year-old man was killed accidentally when a building crane fell on him, killing him.

Rateb Abdul Karim was working in the garages that are owned and operated by

the Jordan University of Science and Technology, when the crane fell on him.

According to Civil Defence reports, the man was carried to Ramtha hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

In Aqaba, a 35-year-old man was killed when his trailer lost control and rolled over, killing him instantaneously, according to Civil Defence reports.

According to hospital officials in Princess Haya Al Hussein Hospital, Talat Mohammad, an Egyptian citizen, was reported dead on arrival.

Meanwhile, in Al Hassa area, a 13-year-old boy died after drowning in Al Hassa stream.

Hussein Mohammed was swimming with his 14-year-old friend Ayman Awad. Both youngsters, who were drowning, were rescued by Civil Defence officers and rushed to Prince Zaid's Hospital.

The doctor at the hospital said the boys had swallowed water which caused the death of the first boy. The second is reported in fair condition.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ The second exhibition of engineering books at the Jordan Engineers Association.
- ★ Exhibition on the 100th anniversary of the death of French novelist Guy De Maupassant at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of Jordanian artists entitled "The Sixth Exhibition — Samples From The Contemporary Jordanian Art 93" at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fakhrelnissa Zaid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat Al Fannun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).

FILMS AND DRAMAS

- ★ Film entitled "The Rescuers Down Under" at the American Centre (on Thursday) at 5:00 p.m. (77 minutes).
- ★ Film (in English) entitled "Malevich and Futurism" (with commentary in Arabic by Mrs. May Mudhaffar) at Darat Al Fannun of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (on Thursday) at 5:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama in Arabic for children entitled "The Question" at Haya Cultural Centre (on Thursday) at 5:00 p.m.
- ★ Lecture entitled "The Mosaics of the Umayyad Period in Jordan" by Professor Michele Piccirillo (on Thursday) at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 7:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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Who's afraid of the word?

THE INTERNATIONAL Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has said in a statement that 75 journalists have died a violent death in many parts of the world. The federation said the journalists — editors, reporters and broadcasters — were killed in Russia, Somalia, Turkey, Georgia, Algeria, Colombia and by the Mafia in Italy. The report cited the conflict in the Balkans as being responsible for the highest number of deaths: 13. It said that while many are the "victims of tragic accidents, some were the targets of violence and others were brutally assassinated." The IFJ did not put the blame totally on the brutality of wars and conflicts, but also blamed journalists and news organisations because they rush to bloody conflicts as part of competition among those organisations.

Writers and journalists have been increasingly under attack, in recent times, from both the regimes and their opponents. This confirms the fact that the media are a powerful weapon feared by all wrongdoers, be they governments, fundamentalists or the mafia.

The high number of assassinated journalists, especially in the Middle East region, is extremely alarming. On top of all the restriction placed on them by the regimes and in addition to arbitrary arrests by the authorities, the threat of death is a serious matter that will eventually result in the muzzling of many journalists. The "soldiers of the fourth estate" are therefore entitled to the highest degree of protection through domestic and international laws wherever they are.

Free expression and the reporting of the truth without fear for one's life is at the core of a journalist's or writer's right. Human rights activists, the U.N. and journalists themselves need to put the issue on the top of their list of priorities. For unless the people's right to know is guarded, neither peace nor democracy will be attained.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

WHAT HAS been happening since the signing of the Oslo deal by the PLO and Israel is a mere waste of time, with the Jewish state stalling and openly announcing a delay in its implementation, said Al Rai daily Wednesday. After all this waste, one can see that the talks are aimed at humiliating the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular, in defiance of the world community and the U.N. Security Council's resolutions. Therefore, one can only demand a halt of the negotiations, said the paper. The paper said that the Israelis have been adamant in their arrogance and procrastination in implementing the Oslo deal and withdrawal from Arab lands and have been turning the Arab peace effort into a mockery. The paper said the Palestinians are victims of continued occupation like the Iraqis who still suffer from the consequences of the Gulf war.

SAWT AL SHAAB daily said that Jordan's mediation between the Yemeni leaders has been successful. Describing Amman's endeavours as being pursued in this respect, over the past few months, within the framework of maintaining and strengthening Arab solidarity, the paper said that Jordan has been driving to achieve this goal for a long time. The mediation efforts, it said, took the forms of messages exchanged through special envoys in Jordan and Yemen which called on the leaders to transcend their dispute for the sake of maintaining national unity and protecting Yemeni national interests. Jordan has succeeded in its peaceful endeavour in view of the two countries' close relationship at all levels and the strong ties between King Hussein and Ali Abdullah Saleh, added the paper.

The new Arab order — coordination, not unity

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

Increasingly, a great deal is being said about "the new Arab order." Though the expression is still somewhat abstract and even vague, it has a better ring to it than the (by now) obsolete motto of "Arab unity." Linguistically, as well as realistically, the term "order," as I shall argue in what follows, is perhaps more accurate and appropriate to use in connection with inter-Arab relations than "unity." While the latter refers to an ideal that may never be realised, at least in the near future, the former denotes an easily workable strategy.

Ever since the day I was born, a little over three and a half decades ago, I have been hearing about Arab unity. Naively but enthusiastically, I, like millions in the Arab World, have always welcomed the idea. In fact, I have often fantasised about it. Imagine: no borders, no border hassle; no jealousies, rivalries, wars of words, plots and (at times) skirmishes; real economic power with gigantic joint business ventures and industries; one monetary system; one geography; one army; one political stand against external challenges and threats, etc. Deep down, I still cherish such sentiments.

Reality, however, is stronger than fantasy. Under the circumstances, Arab unity seems at best far-fetched, at worst an impossibility. Yes, we have one language (despite the dialects which can stand in the way at times), one overall culture (despite the sharply different, even oppositional local/regional varieties), one main religion (essentially in harmony and at peace with the other two significant faiths in the region, Christianity and Judaism); these are all factors congenial to Arab unity. But we also have, unfortunately, insurmountable impediments and obstacles.

The first is political. The Arab World is extremely factionalised. It is composed of a strange mix of political systems and ideologies, most of which are immensely incompatible and incongruous. How can one talk about unity when those who are supposed to scheme, oversee and protect it do not share the same, or at least a remotely similar,

political vision? There is no solid political common ground. Moreover, politics tremendously affects the way each country envisions economy, social structure, culture, morality, ethics, etc. It is next to impossible for two or more politically incoherent countries to form an economically, socially and culturally coherent entity. Whether we like it or not, politics can spoil a lot of things. No wonder all efforts at unity in the Arab World, past and present, have failed, at times miserably.

The second, equally important, has to do with the vagueness of the concept of unity itself. Even though we have been using it for a long time, and even though we assume we know what we mean by it, the word "unity" has never been plausibly, tangibly and lucidly defined. Loosely, it refers to total integration of the political (imagine!), economic and social institutions of "all" Arab countries, from the ocean to the Gulf. How exactly we are to go about implementing such integration has never been carefully and specifically spelled out, not even among those two or three groups of countries which had a go at it. Many sub-units in the Arab World collapsed as abruptly as they were formed. There was no sense of process, no sensible plan.

The Americans know precisely what they mean when they talk about the "United

States of America; the original founders of the union worked out, diligently and meticulously, all the necessary details: the rules, regulations, privileges, institutions, systems, spheres of influence, etc; their descendants refined, polished, amended and developed them. We also know what a United Kingdom is and what a USSR was.

But what does a united Arab World actually mean? To my very pro pan-Arab but illiterate grandmother, it has a certain relish, charm, or meaning, but it is one which is severely blurred by historic nostalgia and emotional patriotic rhetoric, rather than one which is based on sound reasoning and clear vision.

But what does it mean to the experts? A USA (United States of Arabia), a UAK (United Arab Kingdom), or a UARK (Union of Arab Republics and Kingdoms)? Sadly, most, if not all, people (experts and laymen alike) conceive of unity in the Arab World the way my grandmother does. It is all words, fantasies and dreams.

For these two reasons (and others which I have not cited), I think it would be better for us, at least for the time being, to forget about the idea of unity (except, obviously, in cases when two or three neighbouring states which have a lot in common — like Jordan and the future Palestine, the two Yemens, etc. — choose to do so after a long period of thinking and planning) and replace it simply

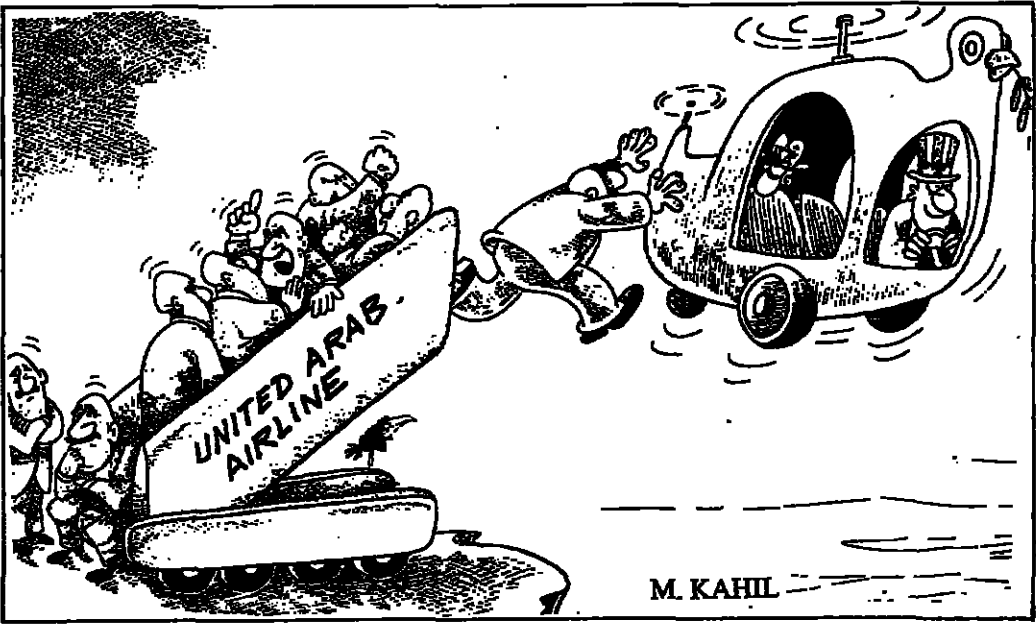
with the much more fitting concept of coordination.

I like the word "order" because it signifies, to me at least, a process of organising, rather than unifying, disorganised and fragmented opinions, efforts abilities and objectives; a process of directing, channeling and rechanneling; in a word, a process of coordination.

Coordination would work better than unity because it neither ignores nor undermines the political, economic, social and cultural autonomy/independence of each Arab country. Under coordination, no Arab state feels intimidated, threatened or afraid of losing its sovereignty. Unlike unity, coordination also recognises the individual varieties, distinguishing features, peculiarities and even differences within each Arab state — all elements which it would be a grave mistake to attempt to eliminate or "unify."

In today's world, the Arab countries have no choice but to work together if they are to survive and assert themselves effectively. It is my deepest conviction that if the Arab states coordinate closely, they will do better in the peace process, will become economically stronger and will enjoy better political stability.

My wish for the New Year is to see a new Arab order based more on coordinated effort than chauvinistic talks about brotherhood and unity.



Hope for Middle East peace still alive

By Robert Mahoney
Reuters

BETHLEHEM, West Bank — A Palestinian flag flutters for the first time since the 1967 Middle East war in the Christmas hill of Bethlehem's Manger Square.

Hoisting it, in defiance of the Israeli army commander, was at once an act of celebration and desperation.

After the elation of the September handshake between PLO chief Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin the mood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is darkening.

Palestinians have seen few improvements in their daily lives under Israeli occupation since the Israel-PLO peace agreement, hailed in September as a historic breakthrough. Failure to begin implementing the accord's first big provision — an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho — by the Dec. 13 deadline has deepened the gloom.

Talks between Israel and its neighbours, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, are on hold while Israeli and PLO negotiators battle it out.

The United States, which twisted Israeli and Arab arms two years ago to begin the whole peace process, has stood aside.

Unlike the Bush administration, the Clinton White House, which is markedly more pro-Israel, is unwilling to intervene unless both Palestinians and Israelis ask it to do so.

It is ready to help Israeli-Syrian talks, U.S. officials say, but any deal with Damascus will have to wait for the Israel-PLO accord to work.

That is proving difficult. Disputes over security, the size of the self-governing Jericho region, and control of crossing

points from the occupied territories to the Arab World, delayed the start of the agreement.

Mr. Arafat and his Fateh wing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation want to trumpet the agreement as the foundation stone of a Palestinian state.

Prime Minister Rabin, trying to sell the accord to a sceptical Israeli public while holding together a shaky coalition government, dares not pronounce the word state, only autonomy.

PLO leaders in the territories know they are vulnerable on this point; hence their desperation to display the symbols and trappings of statehood at every turn.

With world attention focused on Bethlehem, traditional birthplace of Jesus, Fateh has told residents to defy the army and put out more flags. A year ago soldiers would have torn them down. Now they dare not.

The last thing Israel can afford to do is provoke more Palestinian opposition to the deal. Mr. Rabin, almost as much as Mr. Arafat, has staked his political life on the accord which, while not yet unraveling, is certainly looking frayed.

Negotiated in secret in Oslo by a few of Mr. Arafat's closest aides and Israeli officials, the agreement is a deliberately vague compromise, designed to be flexible.

"It is full of landmines which have to be negotiated," Joseph Alpher, head of the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, said. One of the biggest is the 120,000 Jewish settlers dotted among the two million Arabs in the occupied territories.

A small minority of settlers has been engaged in tit-for-tat violence with Palestinian opponents of the agreement. At least 44 Palestinians and 18

Israelis have been killed in various unrest since news of the accord first surfaced.

The militant Islamic group Hamas said on Dec. 21 it would step up attacks against settlers. This would provoke a cycle of Arab-Jewish reprisals and pressure Mr. Rabin to abandon the accord, a Hamas leader told Reuters in Damascus.

On the Israeli side too, militancy is growing. Police have detained several Jews on suspicion of smuggling arms for attacks on Arabs. But mostly opposition has been confined to noisy anti-Rabin demonstrations by settlers.

Mr. Rabin poured extra troops into the territories anticipating Palestinian frustration after the missed December 13 deadline.

Aides say he believes he can keep the lid on the territories long enough for Mr. Arafat to either buy off the opposition or crush them with his own foreign-trained Palestinian police force.

Both sides hope that the transfer of authority from the Israeli military administration to Palestinians coupled with an inflow of promised foreign aid will improve the psychological and economic climate. Israeli officials see this transfer phase as a test for the Palestinians.

If it works, Israel could be far more forthcoming on issues such as settlements and security in the talks on the final status of the territories, which are due to begin after two years.

Sceptics, however, think the Oslo agreement timetable may slip. Even Mr. Rabin has cast doubt on whether Israel will complete its troop pull-out from Gaza and Jericho by the April 13, 1994 deadline. He has said no date was sacred.

"Meeting this deadline is determined more by political

than security concerns," said one Israeli security official.

Palestinians know this. They were furious with Mr. Rabin for his remark. They believe they are the weaker party and feel that Mr. Rabin is "just rubbing our faces in it", as one Fateh member commented. If Israel drives too hard a bargain the whole deal could be off, he added.

Officials on both sides think it possible Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat may find the Oslo provisions unworkable and may leapfrog to final status talks. This would entail delaying or curtailing the Israeli troop redeployment in the West Bank outside Jericho, where the bulk of Jewish settlers live.

More worryingly for some Palestinians, it would also mean the postponement of July 1994 elections for a council to administer self-rule. Israeli officials admit privately they are not concerned whether Palestinians are governed by a democrat or an autocrat as long as he ensures security and stability.

In this scenario Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat would nonetheless still be talking, and Mr. Rabin could resume contact with Damascus. If, as some Israeli officials believe, he is able to craft a peace agreement with Syria in 1994 involving the return of the Golan Heights, Mr. Rabin would probably do no more than initial it. He would call an election, billing the agreement as Israel's breakthrough to the Arab World, to get approval for signing it.

Whatever happens, both Arabs and Israelis believe that the Oslo accord has irreversibly changed their conflict. No matter what, Palestinians are determined that the flag over Bethlehem is not coming down.

Is Israel serious about peace?

Following is an editorial that appeared in the Dec. 17, 1993 issue of the London-based Middle East International:

Yitzhak Rabin has never looked convincing in the role of Israel's de Gaulle, of the soldier who could persuade his countrymen to exchange a savage war for a sincere peace, recognising in the process the legitimate aspirations of an old enemy. As a pronounced hawk who finds himself the leader of a relatively dovish party, Rabin has the strength and the prestige needed to undertake such a volte face; but he lacks entirely the vision and the sense of conviction which enabled de Gaulle to set France on a new and constructive course.

Hence the failure to keep the terms of the accord signed in Washington three months ago, in which it was agreed that "Israel will implement an agreed and scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area," starting on Dec. 13 and to be completed not more than four months later. It was universally recognised at the time that this was an optimistic schedule and that there were powerful forces on both sides who would try to derail the process. But Yitzhak Rabin has never been easily deflected from his purpose by opposition and he was strengthened in this instance by the knowledge that the Israeli electorate had voted for him expressly because the country was sick of conflict and believed in him as the saviour who could put an end to it.

What has so far prevented him from carrying out his undertaking has been his own cautious, suspicious character, coupled with the fact that deep down he almost certainly does not believe in what he is doing. No one who remembers the reluctance with which he accepted the handshake of Yasser Arafat at that historic ceremony on the White House lawn will be surprised by the way the Israeli prime minister has dragged his feet ever since.

He has refused to make any of the gestures which could have helped the process along and encouraged confidence in its chances of ultimate success. He has refused to release more than a small fraction of the thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by the Israelis, many of them without trial and often on trivial charges or none at all. He has refused to remove the very severe restrictions on travel in and out of the occupied territories, restrictions which constitute a form

of collective punishment imposed especially on students requiring hospital visits, or simply to visit chosen places of worship, activities of the Israeli forces, which have the contrary to reduce violent pursuit of suspects, shooting sight or opening fire houses with anti-tank. These and similar cruel enough at a make a mockery of a peace and non-violence which Rabin and his ment are nominally of. They are also syn of the wider failure underlies all the reg to adjust their attitude the Palestinians to a changed circumstances indeed they believe change. But the fact ingrained is the Israel of belligerence, of towards a beaten enemy except for an minority they appear incapable of treating Palestinians as human deserving the same and respect as them.

All this, with the nothing has changed better in the situation Palestinians in the territories, has created the problems for Arafat and his colleagues. The PLO — who have face in addition to opposition of the Zionists, secular as well. The murderous, Hamas have proved Israeli settlers, with for their own cause mayhem in the territories, with the there is no security side and little prospect orderly transfer of a Jericho and the Gaza.

For this deplorable dangerous result, we share the blame; we must take responsibility with the United States for 20 years has blocked initiative aimed at a result acceptable to as well as Israeli of particular, by turning eye to Israel's operation of the West Bank and Gaza (and the Golan) — encouraging any financing Israel's ill-fated programme of 25 years — successful administration collaborated with Israel the dragon's teeth; obstruct the way to

LETTERS

No lull for Aqaba

To the Editor:

Your report entitled "Reopening of Iraq's Umm Qasr worries Jordanian businessmen" (Jordan Times, Dec. 1993) is as welcome as it is predictable.

Indeed, Aqaba has functioned as Iraq's main lifeline for imports during and in the aftermath of the Iraq crisis. It is undeniable that this situation yielded a workload on behalf of the Aqaba port employees and services. In the final analysis, Iraq's channelling its through the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr will deal a blow to the transport sector in Jordan. However, it is not permitted under any circumstances, to take such a development granted and be satisfied with merely voicing our worry concern vis-a-vis the status quo. It is one thing to disavow at such a move and its debilitating effects and another to do so as a prelude to coming up with the solutions to this problem.

Judging by Jordan's quality record in overcoming severe repercussions, namely the devaluation of its currency 1988 and the massive influx of foreign expatriates in territorial borders, one cannot but hail Jordan's ability successfully contain crises in a manner that commands appreciation and respect.

No useful purpose can be served by overlooking the work out contingency plans and strategies on the basis of sound deliberations and studies. All options must be into consideration without ruling out the possibility of singling the situation in coordination with the parties involved. More specifically, the transport sector key figures and combining both naval and land freight agents in Jordan called upon to take the reins of the initiative thereby up the bridges of trust and dialogue marking Jordan's relations with Iraq and Jordan's unequivocal compliance with the United Nations resolutions.

It follows that the representatives of the transport firm Jordan should take this issue up with the government, hand with the Iraqi authorities. While conducting contacts no one should lose sight of the need to safeguard interests of the Jordanian transport sector. These contacts must by no means fall short of a gradual implementation of Iraqi move along with retaining a fair share of Iraq's transported via large vessels that cannot be accommodated at the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr.

More important than the above considerations, certainly is in Jordan's interest to put the U.N. in the of developments which, together with the U.N.-imposed sanctions, have taken their toll on Aqaba in particular Jordan's transport sector in general. These efforts culminate in a call for U.N. sponsored compensation Jordan in return for shouldering such regional responsibility as well as in the form of spearheading the march towards greater degree of democracy and human rights in a Middle East.

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Amman 11121

هكذا صحت القصة

By Leon Barkho
Reuters

Iraq's lone, pregnant lioness — a headache for vet

BAGHDAD — Iraq's only caged lioness, wet and forlorn, peers dejectedly through the bars of her cage.

"She is pregnant — 'the only good news we have had in the past two years, but I fear it won't materialise," said Dr. Adel Suleyman.

The zoo's veterinarian believes Sukkar (Sugar) will miscarry because he cannot provide her with proper food and medicine — a growing problem for his 200-plus birds and animals.

United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq over its 1990 invasion of Kuwait allow imports of food and medicine. But with assets abroad frozen and oil exports choked off, Iraq says it cannot afford to buy

them.

"I can see Sukkar is losing weight and getting more susceptible to disease," said Dr. Suleyman.

There is no anaesthetic left and the vet mentally winces each time he has to treat the lioness, which he has separated from the lion.

"It is brutal the way I inject Sukkar. The drugs, vitamins and minerals I have, which she desperately needs at this stage, are long past their expiry date," he said.

Mahmoud, her tamer, places some meat close to the iron bars and as she approaches suddenly grabs

her tail, three more workers join in pulling the tail firmly to force the lioness against the bars so that Dr. Suleyman can inject her.

Sukkar is not Dr. Suleyman's only problem. He says he can no longer console the only impala left in the zoo.

"Our last remaining impala is withering. He suffers from loneliness. His six companions died, including the last female antelope," he said.

The reddish impala will not survive for long, he believes.

"You can feel it. He is dying. Sometimes he rushes

headlong towards the wall in an apparent attempt to commit suicide," he said.

Hamed Hassan, who looks after the animal, tries to entertain him. "I sit with him and play with him for hours every day to help him survive. But it is no use. He needs a female."

The impalas were brought from Zambia and the zoo authorities have been back in touch with the Zambian authorities.

"They have agreed to send a female. But it is impossible to transport her by land," he said.

U.N. sanctions have sealed Iraq's airspace.

The zoo's 17 monkeys fare no better. They have stopped breeding. For two years, they have been fed on cucumbers and dates which Dr. Suleyman says is not enough to help them reproduce.

"The way we feed them now is far from their main diet."

"We had a pregnancy last year. But the monkey had a miscarriage. For three days she held the dead baby in her arms," he said.

The monkeys, which include baboons and vervets, look pale and bony.

Two of the zoo's six tigers died last year. "The last

pregnancy was in 1988. Under current conditions they will be lucky to survive," Dr. Suleyman said.

Feeding the zoo's carnivorous animals in general is a big headache for Dr. Suleyman. He slaughters one donkey every day to feed the big cats and other carnivores.

"I need about 300 kgs (440 pounds) of meat to keep the lions, tigers, dogs, wolves and eagles well fed. What I offer does not exceed 100 kgs," he said.

"Even donkeys are getting rarer and more expensive. Other meats are too expensive for the zoo's meagre budget."

"It is getting almost impossible to run the zoo. We are just trying to keep the animals alive. Whenever I ask for drugs or food, the authorities say humans come first, then animals."

BOOK REVIEW

Balancing the issue of anti-Semitism

The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite

By Robert D. Kaplan.
Illustrated. 333 pages. \$24.95. The Free Press/Macmillan.

In the late 19th and 20th centuries an Arabist was merely a student of Arabic, like a Hellenist or a Latinist, writes Robert D. Kaplan at the outset of his intriguing new history, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*. "But with the birth of Israel in 1948, the term Arabist quickly gathered another meaning."

As Kaplan quotes Richard Murphy, a former ambassador to Syria and to Saudi Arabia, the word Arabist "became a pejorative for he who intellectually sleeps with Arabs." The author then cites another ambassador who admits that "to a man, the American community in Syria and Lebanon remained opposed to the State of Israel and some even crossed the line into anti-Semitism."

How this state of mind evolved and what its consequences have been for American policy in the Middle East is the subject of Kaplan's history. A contributing editor to *The Atlantic* and the author of several previous books on the Middle East, he argues that one result of the Arabist mind-set has been to encourage Arab opposition to Israel.

Another was the U.S. appeasement of Iraq until it annexed Kuwait. Kaplan writes: "The famous encounter in July 1990 between U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was, in reality, two centuries in the making. Miss Glaspie entered Saddam's lair freighted with the baggage of a venerable Arabist tradition. The real Iraq-gate was never a banking scandal but an epic human story that parallels the history of the American Republic."

Is this conclusion meant to imply subtly that anti-Zionism was involved in the encouragement of Saddam? One can read this as an underlying message. But it should be quickly added that an important trait of *The Arabists* is the length to which it goes to be balanced on the issue of anti-Semitism.

Kaplan begins his story with the 19th-century American Protestant missionaries who went forth on a new crusade to the Middle East, soon acknowledged Muslim resistance to Christian conversion, fell in love with the land and culture and stayed on to encourage an Arab revolt against European imperialism. The crown jewel of the missionaries was what later was named the American University of Beirut, founded in 1871 as the Syrian Protestant College to promote the values of democracy, hard work and free intellectual inquiry.

Next, in a section called "Reality," Kaplan traces the complex events in the 1960s that led some faculty members there to perceive Israel "as the arm of American imperialism in the area, the same way the South Vietnamese government was," as a former faculty member put it. Kaplan writes, "It is both symbolic and highly ironic that the first American taken hostage in Lebanon was David Stuart Dodge...who at the time of his abduction was acting president of the AUB and who was proud that 'AUB had fostered an atmosphere from which Arab nationalism could be born and develop'."

The narrative then veers to the stories of Hume Horan and Jerry Weaver, who were respectively American ambassadors to Sudan and a "refugee coordinator" appointed to monitor the victims of a civil war in neighbouring Ethiopia. These two Americans organised Operation Moses, in which black Ethiopian Jews, known as Falashas, were flown from the Horn of Africa to Israel.

From this heroic account, Kaplan plunges into the debacle of Iraq-gate, in which the United States tilted toward Iraq in its war with Iran. Not only does he not mention anti-Semitism here, he also chiefly blames the absence of an Iraq policy rather than the presence of one. It was the American outlook on Iran that governed events, he insists. As for Ambassador Glaspie: "She was not straight with Saddam," and she "was an area specialist who completely misjudged the overall situation," a misjudgment "that stemmed from the hubris that allowed Westerners to think they could modify the behaviour of another culture and shape it in their own perfected image."

Aside from his ambiguity on anti-Semitism at this point, his conclusion seems a heavy historical weight to put on Glaspie's shoulders, especially when Kaplan has just finished offering evidence that it was her being a woman that was partly the problem, given Hussein's cultural biases. So as well as fudging the issue of anti-Semitism, the conclusion puts a strain on the book's main thesis. The link between the Iraq appeasers and those 19th-century crusaders grows rusty along the way.

Still despite its flaws, "The Arabists remains a vital story. In several ways, the people Kaplan writes about are too alive to be frozen into thesis-supporting statues. His Arabists may prove adaptable, despite the crushing burden of the history he relates — *The New York Times*.

Christopher Lehmann-Haupt

Japanese women still expected to stay at home

TOKYO (AFP) — A single woman looking for a husband should head for Japan — but in this still-conservative society, she would be well-advised to put any career ambitions on hold.

A new study shows that the numbers of unmarried and divorced people in Japan are surging, reflecting some of the far-reaching changes that have swept the country over the past year.

But, it adds, most Japanese still firmly cleave to the traditional idea of the woman's role.

Surveys show 65.7 per cent of men and 55.6 per cent of women still believe "men should work outside, and women should take care of the home," according to the white paper on women carried out by the prime minister's office released recently.

But the number of women approving of this traditional role of Japanese women declined by 15 per cent compared with 10 years ago.

In Japan, as in many other countries, professional women often find them-

selves with a double workload, putting time in at the office as well as carrying out a disproportionate burden of domestic duties, the report showed.

Professional women spend three hours, 52 minutes a day on domestic chores, tasks for which men spend a mere 24 minutes.

The situation has been slow to change, the report said, noting that only 0.7 per cent of men said they shared child-care responsibilities, compared with 63.4 per cent of women.

The report added that thanks to the recession,

higher-educated women looking for positions in major companies were facing harder than their male counterparts.

In Japan, as in other industrialised countries, the number of divorces has risen, as has the number of unmarried men and women. The birth rate has also declined, reaching the lowest level in almost a century, at 1.2 million births in 1992.

Some 85 per cent of Japanese between the ages of 20 and 24 are unmarried, against 69.2 per cent in

1975. The proportion of singles aged 25 to 29 reached 40.2 per cent against 20.9 per cent in 1975.

This trend mainly concerns men, where the proportion of singles is 64.4 per cent for the 25-29 age.

The increase in the number of divorces is particularly high for couples who had already spent a number of years together, the report said.

Sociologists say this is due to changing attitudes towards divorce by women. In many cases women sought a divorce after their husbands retired because

after years of being left alone all day they could not stand having the husband around the house.

The perception of marriage as an institution has also changed, with 66.1 Japanese and 58.3 per cent of men saying they approved of it on the basis of the notion of "marriage is up to an individual, therefore it is all right to get married or not."

In post-war Japan, young women have been expected to get married — with the aid of a match-maker if necessary — before they hit the age of 25.

New Zealand tourism tunes into The Piano

By Geoff Spencer
The Associated Press

AUCKLAND — Ankle deep mud, dark moss-covered forests and cold windswept beaches aren't standard vacation attractions. Nevertheless the tourist industry here predicts the hauntingly beautiful backdrop of a new film will lure thousands of visitors here.

The Piano stars Americans Holly Hunter and Harvey Keitel along with New Zealander Sam Neill in a tale of forbidden love set in an exotic 19th century frontier.

New Zealand is usually depicted as a safe, clean place with beautiful lakes and snow-covered mountains.

That's true but *The Piano* points to another, darker side.

"It's an image that you won't find in any tourist brochure," said Stuart Dry-

burgh, the movie's director of photography. "We've used natural bush to create an intriguing, mysterious setting like nowhere else on earth."

Hunter plays Ada, a mute Scotswoman who sails across the world to the remote New Zealand bush with her nine-year-old daughter for an arranged and loveless marriage.

Dumped on a lonely beach by the ship's crew, the two wait for husband Stewart (Neill), an emotionally starved farmer, to arrive. When he does, he refuses to lug Ada's prized piano through the dense forest to their bush hut.

Unable to bear the Piano's certain destruction on the beach, Ada strikes a deal with an illiterate but passionate neighbour, Baines (Keitel), to get it back. A highly charged love triangle ensues.

The Miramax Films re-

lease has been a box office hit in Europe for several months and was released in the United States in November.

Already a co-winner of the best picture prize at this year's Cannes Film Festival, it's a likely nominee for best foreign film at the next Academy Awards.

In the film's time frame, New Zealand was wild place of primeval woods thick with thousands of birds and inhabited by indigenous Maori tribes.

While many of forests are now replaced with sheep pastures and towns, pockets of original wilderness still exist and remain popular with hikers.

"We studied a lots of photographs taken last century before we selected locations," said Dryburgh, who lives in Auckland, a city of one million, not far from the bush land where the film was shot.

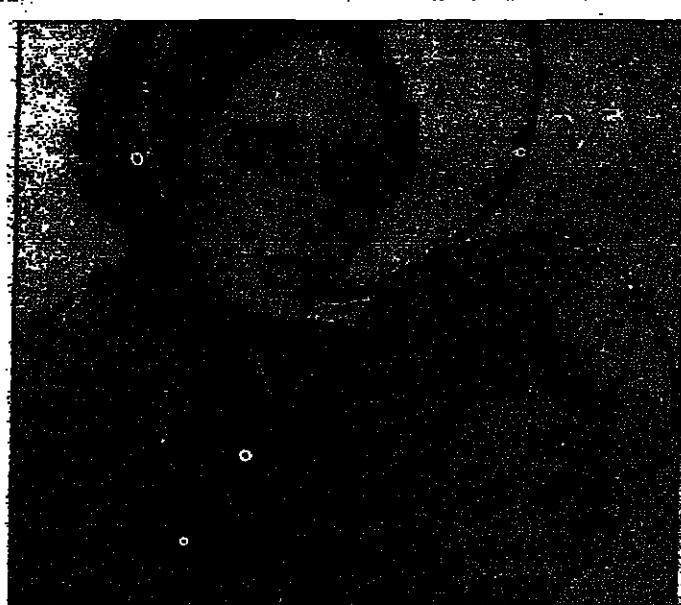
"The New Zealand bush has an underwater-like quality. It's blues and greens bring out the story's dark inner themes."

"We used water trucks to add a lot of mud and rain to accentuate this. Actually, the weather was fine on location."

In the 1980s another film *Crocodile Dundee* showed off the great outdoors of neighbouring Australia through the comic antics of an irascible outback reptile hunter. It attracted tens of thousands of tourists downunder.

"We don't expect the same huge impact from *The Piano*," said New Zealand tourism board spokesman David Beeton.

"It's a totally different sort of film. Of course, when people see it they'll realise how beautiful New Zealand is...and when they come down they'll realise it



Holly Hunter stars in Jane Campion's film *The Piano*

doesn't rain as much as it did on screen."

More than one million foreigners visited New Zealand in 1992. About 15 per cent were from the United

States and 20 per cent from Europe. Tourism is now one of the country's main industries earning 3.1 billion New Zealand dollars (\$1.6 million) in 1992.

Writing was 2nd choice for award-winning novelist

By Nick Louth
Reuters

AMSTERDAM — Writing was a second choice of career for novelist William Boyd.

"I wanted to go to art school, I wanted to be a painter first of all. Two of my mother's sisters were painters. (But) I sensed that parental approval would not be easily forthcoming," said Boyd, in Amsterdam to promote his latest book.

The Blue Afternoon is the story of one man's search to rediscover the love of his life, told by the daughter of the central character, surgeon Salvador Carriscent.

"I thought, why not a daughter? Daughter-father relationships are quite intriguing. I had just written *Brazzaville Beach* and I enjoyed inhabiting a woman's personality," Boyd told Reuters in a rare interview.

"There is a way of doing it. It is quite straightforward, forget gender and concentrate on personality because women are as diffe-

rent from each other as men are."

Boyd's storytelling ability hinges on the power of his characters.

"It is an old piece of advice, 'show not tell', but lots of novelists don't follow it," he said.

"You can't just say 'she was an extremely attractive, high-spirited girl'. You have to show it. You have to construct an encounter or a situation whereby her character can emerge naturally."

Kay Fischer, Dr. Carriscent's daughter, is more than a central character. She is a narrative device — a woman with no love in her life revealing the story of a man whose life revolves around an enduring love.

The Blue Afternoon is Boyd's sixth novel and adds to his growing reputation and critical acclaim.

A *Good Man In Africa* won Britain's Whitbread Prize for best first novel in 1981. It has been made into a film, starring Sean Connery and Diana Rigg. *Brazzaville Beach* won

the 1990 James Tait Black Award and headed the (London) Sunday Times bestseller list.

Boyd takes criticism seriously. He is shy of journalistic intrusion, particularly of sort sometimes used by the British press.

"I actually gave no interviews at all in Britain for this book because I think the climate of interviewing in Britain has changed," he said.

Boyd's first novel was published in 1979. He plans so carefully that he produces only one book every three years.

"I spend about a year or more researching and reading," he said. "Travelling a bit and making notes, building a chart with arrows and squiggles. You make all the bad decisions then, you take all the wrong turnings."

Part of *The Blue Afternoon* takes place in 1902. Using the Philippines city as a backdrop would have allowed many writers the freedom to invent wildly — it was rebuilt

after the destruction of World War II and few who remember the original are still alive.

"I did a massive amount of research. I could find my way around 1902 Manila in the dark. I got this enormous street map and many, many photographs, contemporary accounts, memoirs and so on. I steeped myself in Manila," he said.

In *The Ice Cream War*, which is about a forgotten East African corner of World War I, Boyd writes about a marvellous machine called the sisal decorticator.

"Your eye can alight on anything you like. I decided Temple Smith (one of the book's characters) was a farmer, and looked through the *Kenya Yearbook* 1912. What was farmed? — coffee, cotton, sisal," he said.

"Then you read about sisal and this wonderful word leaps out at you, decorticator," he enthused. Boyd thumbed through the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, researching until he built up an accurate picture of the obscure machine.

A firm of sisal exporters and growers were so delighted that they invited him to lunch in the boardroom. Not everybody reacts so well to Boyd's delvings into the obscure.

"I got a lot of very sneering reviews in scientific journals about the science in *Brazzaville Beach*, because I'm using it as a metaphor, which they (scientists) hate," Boyd said.

Boyd, 41, was born in Ghana and considered Africa his home until he was in his 20s. Three of his novels are set there.

"When I'm going to write a novel it is second nature to set it in Africa, because that is where this great much of memories and images is set."

He went to a British boarding school, which was the inspiration for a television film, *Good And Bad At Games*.

It was when he went to Glasgow University and later to Oxford that Boyd decided to make a serious attempt to write, helped by winning a short story competition.

Mini-sub to offer Loch Ness hunt

LONDON (R) — Tourists hoping to spot the Loch Ness monster will get the chance to hunt for it underwater aboard a mini-submarine next year.

"Each of the dives will be in a slightly different location. Maybe you will see something extraordinary,

maybe you won't," said Alan Whitfield, operations manager of the English company that owns the six-passenger Canadian-built mini-submarine.

legend but something like a humble sturgeon.

The 34-foot (10.36-metre), 24-tone mini-submarine, which is fitted with powerful lights, will start operating in March to help researchers probe the ecology and natural history of the loch.

When it completes searching the 750-foot deep (230-metre) steep-sided Scottish loch, tourists will be offered seats to go monster hunting.

The *Daily Mail* said the hour-long trips would cost about £70 (\$105) a person.

Join the crowd

By Jean-Claude Elias

The question of choosing the most appropriate software package for a given task has been discussed in this column. Looking again at the subject, one may wonder why is the issue so complicated, even though we are only considering here personal computers (PC) and well known, widely used applications like word processing and spreadsheets for instance.

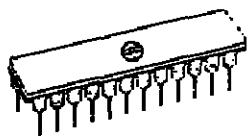
How can anyone decide if Lotus is definitely better than Excel? Or Word for Windows better than WordPerfect? It is technically impossible. A scientific, pragmatic approach will not lead to any clear conclusion. The above mentioned pairs of programmes are extremely performing, error-free (after years of testing and improvements), do the same work and lead to the same results, as far as the user is concerned.

In the world of PC software, the law of natural selection works exactly like for extinct animal species where only the strongest survive. Strongest, for computer programmes, doesn't necessarily mean the best technically. It is very often a matter of intelligent, successful marketing, combined to general user acceptance and endorsement.

Multiplan, one of the very first spreadsheets available for PCs has completely disappeared, though a pioneer of the genre. Very few people now use, or even remember, the Multimate word processor. Programmes that combined spreadsheet, data base and word processing capabilities in one package (Symphony for example, in the late eighties) are not popular anymore.

In addition to the above mentioned marketing, sales factor, another element contributes to making a programme disappear or stay. It is mainly its acceptance, adoption by the largest possible number of users. Neither its technical superiority nor its designers skills

chip talk



are enough to ensure the popularity of a programme. In many ways, it is an uncontrollable phenomenon.

The typical PC user wants the software to be enjoyable to work with, to look at. No marketing study or opinion poll can guarantee that. Communication between users is also important. If most of my friends are using a graphics programme named Da Vinci (assuming there is such a programme), I would most likely turn to it and reject all others.

Deciding for a software that most people use is a better guarantee of continuity in the future. Which means that the best person to advise you on your next software purchase is not necessarily a computer expert but rather a wise person with a lot of common sense (yes, that could also be a computer expert!).

Many people buy a car from manufacturer X not for its superior technical characteristics but simply because it is largely sold in Jordan and therefore is easier to maintain, to repair and to re-sell. PC programmes are not much different. It is very reassuring to know that you have joined the crowd and are doing like everybody else. Technically speaking, it also means that the chance of making a wrong choice is practically nil.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

- ★ If you could siphon the petrol out of one jumbo jet and put it into a minicar, you could drive four times round the world.
- ★ An elephant has 1 lb of brain for every 1000 lbs of body weight.
- ★ Britain's King George III bought over 67,000 books during his lifetime.
- ★ The Egyptians were the first to calculate the solar year with 365 days.
- ★ There is a sport popular in Austria called "ski-joring" which is a land equivalent of water-skiing. The skiers are pulled across snow-covered roads by riders on horseback.

★★★★

SAY IT IN ARABIC

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

- Please, spare my blushes. *Arjoo alla tokhijini.*
- I have nothing to do with this case. *La sha'na lee bil-mawdo.*
- He made my blood boil. *Ja'ala ad'dam yajri fee orooki.*
- It's a bolt from the blue. *Ianaha mufaja'a kobra.*
- I've a bone to pick with you. *Inni aatab alaik.*
- Don't put me in your black books. *La tosee' az'zan bee.*
- He got the boot. *Fosila min amaleh.*
- Don't breach your faith. *La takhoh al-amanah.*
- I've eaten your bread and salt. *Lakad akalto ma'aka khobzan wa mil'han.*

★★★★

HUMOUR

- ★ WIFE: "I've been asked for a reference for our last maid. I've said she's lazy, unpunctual and impertinent. Now can I add anything in her favour?"
- ★ HUSBAND: "You might add that she's got a good appetite and sleeps well."

★★★★

- ★ "What's a raisin?"
- A worried grape.

★★★★

- ★ I have a dog that growls, a parrot that swears, a stove that smokes, and a cat that stays out all night. Why do I need a husband?

★★★★

- ★ "What did the grape say when the elephant sat on it?"
- Nothing. It just let out a little wine.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

IMPORTANT ANIMALS

- BEAVER: A Vegetarian fur-bearing mammal. It lives in burrows on river banks.
- CHAMOIS: Small, goat-like antelope of the mountains of Europe and South West Asia.
- COD: A fish which may reach four feet in length and weigh 100 lbs.
- ELK: Large deer of North Europe and Asia.
- EMU: Flightless Australian bird like an ostrich but smaller.
- FULMAR: An Arctic Bird. It feeds on dead seals and whales.

- HAMADRYAD: A poisonous snake found in India.
- IBEX: Wild goat found in Europe, Asia and Africa.
- KIWI: Wingless bird of New Zealand with feathers.
- MUSTANG: A wild American horse.

COOKING FOR FUN

WARAQ DAWALI MAHSI

Vine Leaves Stuffed With Rice

Common to all Middle East countries.

- TO SERVE 6.
- 1 lb. vine leaves.
 - 2 onions (chopped)
 - 6 sprigs dill.
 - 4 oz. mushrooms, sliced garlic salt.
 - 2 oz. rice.
 - 1 lb. lamb, minced.
 - ½ teaspoon rosemary leaves.
 - 4 tablespoons clarified fat.
 - ½ pint sweet white wine.
 - ½ teaspoon white pepper.

Put the washed and cleaned vine leaves into boiling water and cook for 5 minutes. Strain, cut off stalks and cut each leaf in half down the middle vein.

Melt half the fat and lightly brown onions, add mushrooms and cook another 5 minutes. Add stock, the cleaned rice, and cook for 12 minutes on moderate heat until all liquid has been absorbed by the rice. Remove from heat, add lamb, dill, rosemary and seasoning and knead for 5 minutes.

With the hairy sides of the leaves facing upwards put 1 heaped teaspoon of stuffing on each leaf and roll up fairly tightly, shiny sides of leaves facing outwards.

Arrange side by side at bottom of a shallow pan, layer by layer, and rest of clarified fat and the wine. Cover with a plate with a heavy weight on top, put lid on pan and cook over moderate heat for 35 minutes.

Serve hot.

★★★★

PUZZLES

- (A) Underline which of these animals whose names are hidden in the jumbled letters below is the smallest.

NOBIS
NETIKT
WROTHAG
USEOM
IRGAFFE

★★★★

- (B) Insert a word which means the same as the two words outside the brackets.

DISC (.....) ACHIEVEMENT

Thoughts for this week

If an historian were to relate truthfully all the crimes, weaknesses and disorders of mankind, his readers would take his work for satire rather than for history — Pierre Bayle, French philosopher and critic (1647-1706).

Were there none who were discontented with what they have, the world would never reach anything better — Florence Nightingale, English nursing pioneer.

In seeking wisdom thou art wise; in imagining that thou has attained it thou art a fool — Simon Ben Azzai, second century A.D. Jewish scholar.

Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important

— John Ruskin, English writer-art critic (1919-1900).

100 fils

By E. Yaghi

Truth is often stranger than fiction. A case in point is the story of Mansour, a young engineer who recently married. In order to provide for himself and his spouse, everyday he left his home and headed for the large factory where he worked. His apartment towered over several stores situated underneath it on the ground floor. One shop in particular was located near the main entrance of the building. The owner happened to be a tailor and everyday he saw a young man enter the building shortly after the departure of the engineer. Quite curious as to the frequent visitations, he one day saluted the engineer with, "say, Mansour, how are you doing?"

They exchanged greetings and then the tailor said: "By the way my friend, those pants you asked me to sew for you are just about finished, when can you come for the fitting?" And, oh, I almost forgot to ask, that young man who visits your apartment everyday is your brother or your wife's?"

Mansour's expression knit itself into a question mark and absent-mindedly replied: "Neither." And forgot all about trying on his trousers and hurried upstairs to his apartment. Inside, his wife seemed happy to greet him as usual and almost sang a "hi, Mansour, did you have a hard day? Come, let me help you take your jacket off. Are you tired? I've got a hot meal waiting for you."

But in spite of her jollity, he eyed her suspiciously and gulped down his dinner in stunned silence. He slept early and rose at dawn the following morning. He tried to act normal and when his wife queried about his sullen attitude, he only answered curtly: "I've got a slight problem at the factory but soon it will all be worked out. See you later."

But that day he didn't drive to his job as usual. Instead, he parked his car up the road and circled back on foot to his apartment building. And there, in the small coffee shop across from the main entrance, he sat in a semi-stupor, drinking black bitter tea and observing the area. Not much later, a young man just about his own age, quickly strode past the tailor's and entered the doorway. Mansour turned and he felt that his cheeks burned with fire. He left the fee for his tea on the table and rose, shoved the chair the table and headed for his apartment. Once he ascended the stairs, he stopped before his apartment door puffing with tension, but then he took a deep breath as if to gather an inner extra strength and since he didn't have a key, rang the bell. He thought he heard the sound of scuffling footsteps inside and after some moments, his wife opened the door with a look of surprise and said: "Why, Mansour, what's wrong, did you forget something?"

He roughly pushed her aside and ignoring her question retorted in a deep growl: "Why did you take so long to open the door?"

She splurted out a, "nothing, I was just busy arranging the house and since you were gone, I really didn't expect anyone."

He shook his head in disbelief and questioned: "Are you sure there's no one here?"

For the second time, he noted her surprise and her voice appeared strained when she almost swallowed the words, "of course I'm sure no one is here. Why are you asking such questions?"

But, he had no time for guessing games so he quickly stomped to his bedroom, swept the clothes in the closet to one side, looked inside, swung around and then threw himself down on his hands and knees. He drew up the

bedspread with one hand and confronting him face to face, he saw two black, frightened eyes.

"Come out at once," he almost screamed and then in a gentler voice, "don't be afraid, I won't hurt you."

The same man who he had seen entering the apartment building now crawled out from under the bed and stood in front of him. Mansour yelled to his wife who stood petrified with a face that had turned blue: "Go and make some coffee right now for your guest and me."

She disappeared into the kitchen and he beckoning to the stowaway, ordered, "come along with me into the sitting room and tell me all about yourself and how you came to be in my home at such an early hour in the morning and under my bed at that."

Mansour couldn't help noticing that the culprit's whole body shook and presently, his wife, also in a state of trembling, brought two cups of very black and bitter coffee. "Well, my friend, please feel right at home. Don't be bashful and help yourself to my coffee."

The cup rattled on the saucer as the visitor grappled for the beverage and drank in one swig the murky liquid. To his wife, Mansour nodded and offered in a kindly voice: "Please my partner in marriage, do sit down and don't worry about mixing with strangers, for I am here to protect you from any evil that might befall you."

As soon as the man with the shaking hand finished his coffee, Mansour stated bluntly, "this cup costs 100 fils."

"What? This isn't a coffee house so why do you ask for money?" queried the nervous visitor.

"If I were you my friend, I would just hand over the money and not ask anything. Pay up and then you're free to leave."

The husband then took the money, saw his guest to the door and proceeded to sit down just where he had been and thought and thought. Later he announced to his still shaking wife, "you know, I've just had a good idea. I've been working too hard lately and haven't seen enough of either my family or yours. Why don't we hold a big picnic and invite everyone?"

Thus it was that a few days later, Mansour had a grand outing with all his brothers and his wife's too. Furthermore both his father and father-in-law attended the feast. There happened to be a lot of tasty food, hot tea, soft drinks and an abundance of fruit.

After everyone had eaten their fill, Mansour laid down on a picnic blanket and began to toss up a coin into the air and say: "Boy, how good this money is to me and how much it means!"

When he repeated the action several times and kept saying the same words, one of his brothers sitting near him, said, "what's wrong, man, have you gone crazy?"

What's the big deal about his 100 fils coin you keep throwing up in the air?"

"Well, that's a story in itself. I think we men should get together and discuss this." And to his wife, Mansour ordered, "why don't you join us?"

All the men folk circled around Mansour and his spouse and each listened attentively as the centre of attention spoke, addressing his wife's brothers with, "I want all the money I paid for your sister, from the day I married her until now, or else, I will let her tell you what this ten krosch stands for."

Needless to say, he was reimbursed for all his monetary investment in his bride and she now resides in her father's house where she has plenty of time on her hands to contemplate very seriously the meaning of that coin.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 30

8:30 Family Matters/Sitting Pretty

Laura has a great idea: Why not have a nursery in her home? In no time at all her home turns into a mad house, considering that over twenty children move around the house every day.

9:10 Act Of Will

Kristina finds out the drawbacks of love without trust. She moves to the U.S. and that is where she finds out that things can only get better.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Movie Of The Week — The Adventure of The Wilderness Family.

Starring: Robert Logan and Susan Shaw

The Robinsons have now got used to living in the wilderness, and seem to enjoy Nature more than before. Their encounter with fierce animals seem to be "natural" so to speak.

Friday, Dec. 31

8:30 Just The Job

The Train Engineer

A documentary that portrays some familiar and not so familiar professions. This week we peep behind the "train engineer."

9:00 E.N.G.

Harvest

Channel 10 is faced with a moral issue: Whether or not to report a story involving bribery. Mike has to choose

between friendship and his profession morality.

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Alien Years

Saturday, Jan. 1

8:30 Fanelli Boys

Don announces to his brothers that they soon will be co-managers of an upcoming heavyweight boxer, who will make them rich.

9:00 Talk Show

9:30 (The Campbells)

The place is 19th century Canada; the battle for winning the general elections has started, with the head of the Conservative Party calling for the unity of Canada.

10:00 News In English

10:30 Feature Film — Big Business

Starring: Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin

All kind of bizarre things are inevitably going to happen, when two identical twins both in name and looks, happen to stay in the same hotel.

Sunday, Jan. 2

8:30 You Bet Your Life

9:10 The Power Game

The Congress

After the 1974 U.S. elections, the big legislative barons at the House had to account themselves to a

group of newly appointed members — none of them has been on the payroll more than a week.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Island Son

Heart And Soul

Starring: Richard Chamberlain

A big moral issue faces a mother; whether to donate her dying daughter's heart to a boy with a failing heart.

11:10 The Golden Palace

Monday, Jan. 3

8:30 The Torkelsons

Mr. and Mrs. Torkelsons have been separated for over a year. Now, the husband is back hoping for a reunion.

8:55 A new cultural, folkloric and artistic programme which focuses on different aspects of the cultural life in Jordan. The programme is written and hosted by the Jordanian Poet Jeryes Samawi and directed by Valeria Madanat.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Clayton

Starring: Lee Van Cleef

Lee Van Cleef plays the sheriff who is after a vicious family, responsible for a number of crimes.

Tuesday, Jan. 4

8:30 The Respected Family

The parents have just settled to a quiet life when their married daughter walks in with her children. Her bad news does not sound bad to her father!

10:00 New In English

10:20 Till Murder Do Us Part

Everything turns black to the betrayed wife. There is no one to support her as everyone is siding with her husband. Her solution is with a gun.

9:10 Man And The Machine

The Billion Dollar Baby

Trading with babies in Romania and sold to families in America means big business. It means \$1 billion. The police goes after the brokers.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Cape Rebel

In South Africa, The Boer War prisoners are taken to St. Helena Island. This is the story of one prisoner who prefers a life sentence than death by a firing squad.

11:10 Night Court

Rabid

Dan is bitten by a dog.

Wednesday, Jan. 5

8:30 Too Close For Comfort

Your Guest Is As Good As Mine

Uncle Henry seems inhospitable as he receives his brother's daughter as a guest. Her actions seem to infuriate him.

9:10 Panorama

Peace Made In Hell

The documentary programme Panorama takes us behind the scenes where Europe's most vulnerable new state is being carved out, while the victors are still grabbing the spoils of war.

10:00 New In English

10:20 Till Murder Do Us Part

Everything turns black to the betrayed wife. There is no one to support her as everyone is siding with her husband. Her solution is with a gun.

مركز الصحافة

Oliver Stone returns to cinematic obsession — Vietnam

By Matt Spetalnick
Reuters

LOS ANGELES — Seven years after he emerged as a major filmmaker and Hollywood iconoclast with his hitherto epic *Platoon*, Oliver Stone has returned once again to his greatest obsession — the Vietnam War.

Heaven And Earth, Stone's first film since igniting a storm of controversy with his 1991 release of

JFK, is his third project growing out of experiences as a decorated Vietnam combat veteran.

Stone says his intent this time is to "humanise" the Vietnamese and help heal the wounds of war. But the movie, which opens Christmas Day, is all but certain to inflame passions and stir the kind of political debate that is now expected of any stone film.

From Wall Street greed to John F. Kennedy's assass-

ination, Stone has become a lightning rod for controversy with movies centring on some of America's most provocative themes.

Still smarting from the stinging attacks he endured for JFK, Stone is now bracing himself for another round of heated polemics.

"I'm a target. It's not fair," he said angrily in a recent interview. "I've been castigated by know-nothings and ignorants as anti-American, which I am not," he said.

In JFK, political columnists and newspaper editorialists accused him of twisting history and blurring the facts so effectively that millions who saw the movie now believe Kennedy was assassinated in a coup d'etat.

Stone's thesis was simple but highly debatable: Kennedy was murdered by a military and CIA conspiracy that seems to include almost everyone but Lee Harvey Oswald, the man the official Warren Commission inquiry determined was the lone gunman.

Stone said his only regret is that in the heat of the JFK battle, he became "more of a political symbol than a filmmaker," overshadowing his own movie's cinematic qualities.

"I still think this is the greatest lie in America mid-century," Stone declared.

"My movie was I think a poetic counterattack, a counter-myth, to the mythology of the Warren Commission."

Stone spent so much time on talk shows and newscasts defending JFK that it ended up taking him a full two years to release his next film, *Heaven And Earth*.

While no one expects the debate surrounding *Heaven And Earth* to reach the fevered pitch of JFK, it could generate more controversy than Stone's other two Vietnam movies, *Platoon* (1986) and *Born On The Fourth Of July* (1989), which both won him Academy Awards for best director.

Stone is ready for conservatives to denounce him for the sometimes sympathetic view given of America's former enemies. He may also touch a raw nerve with his depiction of a Vietnam veteran unable to cope with his postwar existence.

But he insists he took pains to apportion the blame, showing acts of brutality on both sides. Declared Stone, who has recently become a practicing Buddhist: "America is still Angry at Vietnam, and this is bad for our soul, our national karma."

The story, adapted from the memoirs of a Viet-

namese woman, Le Ly Hayslip, is told through the eyes of a peasant girl born to war in a remote rice-farming village.

"She goes through extraordinary changes. She is a traitor, a spy, tortured, raped, a rich man's mistress, a beggar in the streets. She's a prostitute, the wife of a GI (American soldier), then a housewife in America," Stone said.

For the lead role, Stone chose an unknown — Hiep Thi Le, a 23-year-old university student who left Vietnam at the age of nine in a group of boat people. The film also stars Tommy Lee Jones as the soldier who marries her.

Stone said his mother always wanted him to make a *Gone With The Wind* type of love story, and "this is the closest I can get to it."

Stone had originally hoped to film in Vietnam but switched to Thailand after running into major obstacles — a continuing U.S. embargo and Vietnamese officials who demanded script changes to paint their forces in a better light.

Of his own time as a soldier in Vietnam, the 46-year-old director said: "It has marked me forever."

Stone, who grew up in luxury on Manhattan's East Side, made one of Yale



Director Oliver Stone (back left) with the stars of his latest movie *Heaven And Earth*, Tommy Lee Jones (back right), and in foreground left to right, Le Ly Hayslip, Hiep Thi Le and Joan Chen

University to volunteer for combat duty. He was wounded twice.

Since then, Vietnam has served as an enduring source for his most powerful cinematic preoccupation — so much so that he says he may make a fourth and

even a fifth movie on the subject.

Now in the midst of a divorce, Stone said he is throwing himself into his work.

He recently met with deposed Panamanian military ruler Manuel Antonio

Noriega at a Florida prison and said he is planning a satirical film about his overthrow. He is teaming up with Disney for a screen adaptation of the stage musical *Evita* and is editing *Natural Born Killer* for release next summer.



Oliver Stone

Clyde Otis — the songwriter singers keep coming back to

By John Swenson
Reuters

NEW YORK — Singers love Clyde Otis, both Nat King Cole and his daughter Natalie have, decades apart, sung his songs and Dinah Washington liked his work so much she offered to make him her seventh husband.

He declined the offer but did convince her to record her most famous song — "What A Difference A Day Makes" — and changed her overnight from a successful singer into one of the hottest stars of the 1950s.

The 69-year-old songwriter's stable of singers who have performed his work is staggering — Elvis Presley, Ben E. King, Brook Benton, Sarah Vaughan, Georgia Gibbs, Johnny Mathis, Patti Page, Connie Francis, Bobby Blue Bland, Garth Brooks and the Isley Brothers.

But now in what should be the twilight of his career, Otis has discovered a new way to keep his songs before the public — recycling.

Take a look at *Take A Look*, a fervent plea for black America to help itself that he wrote for Aretha Franklin at the beginning of her career and went nowhere.

It has finally become a hit 28 years later as the title track of Natalie Cole's

latest album. "She's a nice girl but I only met her twice, once when she was two years old and once when I gave her this song. She didn't even know I wrote songs for her father," Otis said.

The song made the number one slot in the top 10, hit the jazz, rhythm blues and pop charts as well and gave a big boost to Cole's latest album which is named after the song.

"I've had number one songs in all fields, including country. In fact, I've had four number one songs in country. My song *It's Just A Matter Of Time* was number one twice in country, once with Sonny James and then 20 years later with Randy Travis. It's still on the charts in the Randy Travis version," he said in a recent interview.

Otis's career began in 1955, when he crashed a party of music publishers and sold one of his songs, *That's All There Is To That*, which became a hit for Nat King Cole.

His greatest creative collaboration was with Brook Benton, with whom he wrote and produced 18 hits. The association enabled Otis to become the first black label's artist repertoire department when Mercury Records hired him for that position in 1959.

Otis was responsible for turning Benton into Mercury's biggest recording star of the era.

"Nat Cole had a hit with *Looking Back* and said he needed some more songs," Otis recalled from his office in Englewood, New Jersey, where he runs a successful publishing company in partnership with his son Isidro.

"Brook and I put seven songs together. As we were making the demos Brook and I looked at each other and I said 'you sound pretty good on there.' I was already talking with Mercury and told them about these demos.

"They didn't think it was a good idea because Brook had been recording for four years without success, but Brook and I decided to make his first Mercury sessions out of those seven songs. All of them went on to be monster hits."

Among the hits Benton scored with were *Endlessly*, *For My Baby*, *Hurtin' Inside*, *It's Just A Matter Of Time* and *The Boll Weevil Song*.

Otis produced a remarkable string of 17 consecutive hit singles with Benton. Otis also produced such memorable hits for Mercury as Sarah Vaughan's only million-selling single, *Broken Hearted Melody*.

It's *Just A Matter Of Time* was a number one RB

hit in 1958 for Benton. Twelve years later Otis recycled it for Sonny James, for whom it became a number one hit, and 20 years later he recycled it once more for Travis.

"It's because of the universality of the message. People aren't any different in Nashville than they are in Los Angeles, or Texas, any more than they are right here. It is a timeless song," he says.

Otis takes particular satisfaction in proving the timelessness of *Take A Look*, which argues that blacks have to make their own success. "It's a plea for selfhood. Let's be very honest, I don't believe whites in America owe blacks anything," Otis said.

He said the song was kept from being a hit in its original release because it was politically sensitive — too radical an idea for conservatives and too entrepreneurial a message for militant black leaders.

"Nobody wins," go the lyrics. "When the prize is hate." Otis thinks this message is just as relevant today as when he wrote it.

"We've reached the point in our history where somebody's got to tell the truth," he said. "We cannot continue to let our young people think that the world owes them something. Get off your ass and do it, that's what America is about."

By William MacLean
Reuters

KUWAIT — Kuwait, custodian of one of the most important collections of Islamic art, is taking new pride in treasures that spent the Gulf War in crates in Baghdad.

Its Islamic Art Museum has decided to build a permanent home for the priceless objects that became a national symbol after Iraqis occupied Kuwait and carted them away.

"In the occupation, suddenly Kuwaitis started to identify with the collection. They felt it really belongs to them," Museum Director Sheikh Hussa Al Sabah said in an interview.

"I was in a supermarket after liberation. Women came up to me anxiously and said: 'Are you Hussa? When are our objects coming back?'"

"Suddenly it had become 'our objects' and not those of the museum, which they had probably never visited before. All of a sudden there is this awareness and pride."

She said the collection was now cherished even by Kuwaitis previously indifferent to it because at one time they believed the treasure, like the country itself, was lost forever.

During the occupation, Iraq's Department of Antiquities packed carpets, daggers, coins and Korans from displays and shelves in a

part of the Kuwait National Museum and took them to Baghdad.

Since 1975 Sheikh Hussa and her husband Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who is in charge of selecting and purchasing pieces, have toured the world in search of Islamic Art.

They purchase the objects with their own funds but loan most of them permanently to the state for display. Like other Muslim collectors their aim is to restore to the Islamic World objects removed to Europe and America by collectors in colonial times.

They have amassed 20,000 objects in gold, silver, glass, stone, pottery, ancient Islamic manuscripts, ornate carved doors and elaborate brass jugs made in Islamic countries from Africa to South East Asia.

The oldest object in the collection is a parchment page from an 8th century Koran believed to be from Mecca or Medina.

Academics say it is one of the world's best and most comprehensive collections of Islamic Art and one of the very few such collections designed to be on permanent public display.

For now, much of the collection remains privately stored in the Gulf War-era packing crates. It will move sometime over the next two years into a temporary site

at a converted hospital.

Later Sheikh Hussa and her husband will build a permanent museum on land donated by the government. Before the war their objects were merely allocated rooms in the National Museum.

Meanwhile specialists clean, catalogue and photograph a stream of new purchases. Scholars from the British Museum in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York visit regularly.

"Not all the objects were made for Muslims and not all were made by Muslims," Sheikh Hussa said. "They were produced by Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists. It's a human heritage and we want to share it."

At the time of the Iraqi invasion, more than 100 of the collection's most spectacular pieces were on display in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. The exhibition later moved to the United States and became a rallying point for the campaign to liberate Kuwait.

"When I was in the U.S. I made the point that we Kuwaitis are the products of Arab and Islamic civilisation and we are in exile like the collection," Sheikh Hussa said.

"Kuwait is not just some small country. It has a people and a heritage," Sheikh Hussa said.

The show has since visited France, Canada and Holland. It will spend next summer in Florence and the autumn in Geneva.

The show includes an 18th century north Indian gold pendant set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, a brilliant 16th century blue and cream Iranian manuscript, a 15th century carved ivory box from Spain and a 10th century Iraqi brass astrolabe.

Iraq returned most of the collection within a year of liberation, but some items remain missing, including three huge 17th century emeralds from Mughal India.

The emeralds are so well known internationally that they are unsaleable. But experts say they might be cut up and sold.

Sheikh Hussa said Kuwait was claiming 18 million dinars (\$60 million) from Iraq through the United Nations for all the missing objects and the cost of repairing broken objects.

Asked to show a favourite piece, Sheikh Hussa slipped a ring from her finger, a recently bought 11th century Afghan gold ring, inlaid with silver and garnet inscribed with a phrase she said means "everything will pass."

"I like to wear it because its message reminds me that Kuwait must learn to get over the trauma we have been through."

Judgment Day nears as restorers put sparkle back in Michelangelo

By Philip Pullella
Reuters

VATICAN CITY — The Day of Judgment is nigh.

After nearly four years of cleaning, Michelangelo's Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel is nearly restored.

By April, when the scaffolding comes down, all his Sistine Chapel frescoes will be visible again for the first time since a multi-million dollar restoration scheme began 14 years ago.

The Last Judgment, which the Renaissance art historian Vasari called "that great painting sent by God to men on earth", was the final part of the chapel to be cleaned.

It was also the most challenging and controversial. "It was a continuous discovery. This was much

more complex compared to the ceiling," said Giancarlo Colalucci, chief restorer of one of the world's great art treasures.

It was Colalucci's hand that touched God's life-giving finger in the ceiling's famous Creation scene and the stern face of Christ in the Last Judgment but he speaks matter-of-factly of his work.

"We found many places where Michelangelo corrected himself. He would paint something one way and then change his mind and alter it," Colalucci said, permitting a close-up look at the restored work from the scaffolding.

"Perhaps as he became older he became more of a perfectionist."

By next Easter, 486 years

after Michelangelo began painting the chapel where popes are elected, it will reemerge with all the brilliance it had in 1541 when he replied to impatient Pontiffs who had taunted him over the years: "It is finished."

During the 14 years since Colalucci began cleaning the ceiling, he developed his own internal guidance system — a marriage of intimate knowledge of Michelangelo and modern restoration techniques.

The Last Judgment — which Colalucci began cleaning in 1990 after 10 years' work on the ceiling — is a dizzying swirl of 336 figures depicting the Renaissance master's fearsome vision of humankind's final moments.

A timid Madonna turns away from a vengeful Christ as he judges the living and the dead. Saints float to paradise welcomed by trumpeting angels while the damned tumble into the fires of hell, where hungry serpents await them.

The 160-square-metre (1,720-square-foot) wall is awe-inspiring and the difference between the cleaned frescoes and those yet to be restored is breathtaking.

The frescoes have been restored to their original colours — liberated from centuries of grime, dirt, smoke stains and the blunders of earlier would-be restorers.

The sky, which for years had taken on the colour of a polluted lake, has been res-

tored to the original dazzling blue that Michelangelo achieved with lapis lazuli, a stone which was the most expensive blue pigment available in his time.

The overall result of the restoration is a riotous assault on the senses.

Because the Last Judgment wall was more accessible to restorers than the 21-metre-high 69-foot-high ceiling, it suffered from more tampering and was a greater challenge for Colalucci.

would-be restorers in centuries past used glue to brighten the frescoes temporarily or highlighted the outlines of the figures with dark paint to make them more visible.

"It was like a minefield," Colalucci said, explaining

how he had to distinguish between touch-ups Michelangelo added after the fresco was dry and those added by subsequent restorers.

"You had to know everything ahead of time because the technique is different for cleaning what was painted on wet plaster and what was painted on a dry surface," he said.

One thing which was no surprise to Vatican restorers of the Last Judgment was the infamous loincloths or "Modesty Breeches" painted over the frescoes after Michelangelo died.

Perhaps more than any work of art in the Vatican, Last Judgment was a victim of the fault lines of history.

The 1545-1563 Council of Trent, which spearheaded the counter-reformation, decreed rules of decorum

for religious art and ordered some Last Judgment nudes to be covered with loincloths.

Before April, Vatican experts will decide which loincloths to remove and which to leave as documents to history.

In all, 38 breeches and veils were painted over the original nudes in the centuries after Michelangelo finished painting the world's most famous chapel in 1541.

Breeches painted by unknown restorers as late as the 18th century will be removed. But some of those painted by Daniele Da Volterra, who carried out the council's edict, will remain.

Vatican officials consider those painted by Da Volterra — who went down in history with the fitting nickname "breechmaker" — historically important because he was obeying a church edict.

"What constitutes a document should be conserved along with the artistic original," said Fabrizio Mancinelli, chief art historian for the Sistine Restoration Project.

"The golden rule is: What you leave can always be removed later. It is better to be cautious than remorseful," he said.

Some critics say all those that can should be removed.

Most of the breeches were painted over the original, but for others plaster was hacked out and new frescoes painted on fresh plaster. They will remain because the original no longer exists.

Poverty and slow reform choke Bulgaria's health service

By Liliana Semerdjieva
Reuter

SOFIA — Bulgaria's only orthopaedic and traumatology hospital is a useless shell of dark, deserted corridors, uninhabited wards and closed surgeries.

Doctors read magazines instead of wielding scalpels and sigh for the hectic time when 20 operations were carried out each day. "Now we turn back sick children coming from all corners of the country," said one.

The hospital at Gorna Banya on the outskirts of Sofia fell into a coma in October, when a financial crisis put a stop to operations, condemning some

300 children and three times as many adults to disability.

"Our hands are tied," said Panaiot Tanev, chief of the Spinal Surgery Department, pointing to the only patient left in the 25-bed department — 12-year-old Aneta from the rural northeastern town of Targovishte.

Aneta's spine was twisted like a snake, but she was lucky enough to have received the hospital's last operation for the foreseeable future. Her spine is now completely straight.

The hospital spent all the money it received from the government by July and ran for another four months on

credit. Now, burdened by debt, it cannot even pay for disinfectant, dressings, anaesthetics or heating, let alone medicines, most of which are foreign-made.

Health Ministry officials say the work of the orthopaedic hospital is not life-saving so its operations can be delayed.

Similar stories are told throughout the country.

The public sector in Bulgaria, as in other reforming East European states, has been one of the main victims of the belt-tightening which has had to accompany tough market reforms.

The situation threatens to

deteriorate sharply because the government has had a huge and unexpected shortfall in tax revenue.

Deputy Health Minister Zlatitza Petrova said that because the financial crisis was so critical, the ministry had ordered hospitals to perform only urgent operations and some specialised treatments.

The government plans to ask parliament to increase the budget deficit by \$160 million to help meet overdue public sector payments, but it is still not clear whether this will fill the gap.

The prospects for the health service are not

bright. The government is expected to freeze public sector subsidies in real terms next year to help make ends meet.

Health Ministry chiefs said that this year's money ran out in September or October and that if there is no more next year they cannot take responsibility for the nation's health.

But it is not just a question of money. A major part of the problem lies in confusion surrounding efforts to reform the centrally-planned health care system.

Big hospitals in sparsely-populated rural areas have been kept running while

specialist hospitals serving patients from the whole country struggle to survive on funds from one small local authority.

John Wilton, head of the World Bank office in Sofia, said one of Bulgaria's first priorities must be to study how existing facilities could be used more effectively.

"Bulgaria's medical staffing and service capacity is at the higher end of the range for central and East European countries," he said. "But the system is fraught with inefficiencies."

A new health insurance system has yet to be drawn up and there is no long term health care policy.

Urgently-needed reforms in health care, as elsewhere in Bulgaria's crumbling public sector, have fallen victim to political squabbles.

In the meantime, economic hardship is taking its toll on the nation's health.

"Health care reflects the state of a country as a whole," said Choudomir Nachev, a department director at Sofia's Medical University.

"The Bulgarian, sandwiched between chronic stress and impoverishment, substitutes vegetables and meat in his dish with bread, which leads to fattening," said Dr. Nachev.

He said 1.5 million people suffered from hypertension and a third were overweight. The country has one of the highest rates of strokes in the world and one in every 50 Bulgarians has lung cancer. Diseases like tuberculosis, which had almost been wiped out, have begun to reassert themselves.

A World Bank mission said last month that critical health services had to be improved to halt the rise in Bulgaria's death rate. The mission pinpointed emergency medical services, primary health care and blood transfusion as areas of urgent need.

U.S. lacks funds to help fight world TB epidemic

By Loran Neergaard
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States can't help finance the global fight against tuberculosis, despite dire warnings that TB resurgence here is fueled by the world epidemic, an official said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) asked the U.S. government to fund a third of its \$9 million programme to fight the deadly lung disease in developing countries and to thwart its mutation into incurable strains.

About one-third of the world's population is infected with the TB germ and eight million get sick every year. Doctors hoped to eradicate TB here by 2010, but cases instead have jumped 20 per cent since 1985.

"Apathy courts a public health disaster," Sen. Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey

warned recently in a letter urging the U.S. Agency for International Development to approve the funds.

But the agency, which dispenses foreign aid, doesn't have \$3 million to spare. Dr. Ann Van Dusen, the agency's global health chief, said.

"In the budget environment that we're looking at, it is a lot of money. It's funding we just don't have," she said.

The agency's health funds are already committed to AIDS, child health and family planning programmes, she said. It has cut other programmes, including tropical disease and malaria vaccine research.

The decision illustrates the problem health officials have in this tight budget era: Which disease gets the priority?

WHO contends that a killer of three million people a year — more than all other

infectious diseases combined — should, noting that \$13 is all it takes to cure a TB patient in many countries.

"It is a logical, simple, cheap thing for America to do to bring a halt to what otherwise will be an incurable plague in the 21st century," said WHO's Richard Bumgarner, deputy director of the agency's TB programme.

And drug resistance strains are rising so rapidly that the centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has called for forcibly committing patients who don't properly take their medicine.

WHO last month blasted the United States and other countries for failing to fight TB. The world gave only \$16 million in TB aid to developing countries in 1990, when it killed 1.9 million, but found \$77 million for leprosy, which only killed 2,000.

Yet Mr. Bumgarner had been more optimistic since President Bill Clinton told the United Nations that he was searching for modest foreign investments in health and other areas that would provide instant results.

Mr. Bumgarner said WHO's TB projects such a plan. It will provide developing countries new drugs and training about TB treatments that work in half the time of the old year long therapy. Shorter therapy means patients have less time to spread TB and are less likely to quit the medicine and thus develop drug resistance.

But contributions from WHO itself, Japan, Sweden and a handful of other countries and agencies didn't equal \$9 million. Without U.S. aid, "there's really no hope...to do what we need to do," he said. He will reapply.

Any caffeine consumption during pregnancy is risky

CHICAGO (AP) — Adding to the wealth of conflicting data about caffeine, researchers said that women who drink as little as half a cup of coffee a day right before or during pregnancy may raise their risk of miscarriage.

The researchers, led by Dr. Claire Infante-Rivard of McGill University in Montreal, compared 331 women who had miscarried with 993 who had experienced normal pregnancies.

Consuming as little as 48 milligrams of caffeine — about the amount in half a cup of coffee — a day during the month before conceiving appeared to boost

the miscarriage risk by 29 per cent. Consuming the same amount during pregnancy boosted the risk by 15 per cent.

Each additional 100 milligrams of caffeine daily boosted the risk an additional 22 per cent, the researchers said. That is about the amount of caffeine in eight ounces (225 grams) of coffee, 15 ounces of tea or eight to 15 ounces of soft drinks containing caffeine. It also is found in many over-the-counter pain remedies.

"A reasonable recommendation would be to reduce consumption of caffeine beverages during pre-

gnancy," the researchers wrote in the Journal of the American Medical Association. They stopped short of recommending that women quit altogether.

The study comes 10 months after federal researchers reported that expectant mothers who consumed up to 300 milligrams of caffeine daily had no higher rates of miscarriage or small fetuses. Other studies have yielded conflicting results.

Since 1980, the Food and Drug Administration has recommended that pregnant women cut down on caffeine, authors of the new study noted. That recommendation was based on

animal studies, but most doctors probably advise their patients along those lines, they said.

Dr. Richard P. Leavitt, director of Science Information for the March of Dimes, which was not involved in the study, said, "any drug that crosses the placenta, as caffeine does, may be regarded as possibly hazardous, especially during the first three months of pregnancy."

Women who want "complete peace of mind about the possible hazards of caffeine" should avoid it altogether, the March of Dimes said in a statement.

Even mercy killing backers criticize new euthanasia rules

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — New guidelines for unrequested mercy killing are creating fear and uncertainty among the doctors they are meant to regulate, the Royal Dutch Medical Association said.

The Justice Ministry has issued new reporting guidelines for euthanasia legislation passed by parliament last month.

"Everyone is still in the dark about what's going to happen to these cases," Rob Dillmann, the association's assistant director said.

Specifically, doctors are questioning whether the government will follow through on threats to prosecute only certain cases.

Guidelines for requested euthanasia virtually guarantee physicians immunity

from prosecution if they carefully follow rules in reporting such acts to law enforcement authorities. To qualify for mercy killing, patients must be suffering irremediable pain and ask repeatedly and lucidly for death.

But the government has pledged to prosecute every case of unrequested mercy killing, despite reporting guidelines that require doctors to follow extra precautions.

The legislation, which still needs the approval of the parliament's Justice Committee, does not legalise euthanasia. Convicted violators are still liable to a sentence of up to 12 years in prison.

No physician has been sentenced to prison in recent years for euthanasia, a

common practice with several thousand cases a year carried out using the guidelines originated by the medical association.

"The problem is not whether these questions are clear or not, the problem is what the prosecutors are going to do with the answers," Mr. Dillmann said.

To placate euthanasia foes, government officials repeatedly warned during parliamentary debate that all non-requested cases will be brought to court. But they did not indicate how strenuously the cases would be prosecuted.

The medical association urged the government to draft a clear prosecution policy so physicians will not be stranded in legal limbo. "This is becoming too complicated," said Gean

Röell, vice-chairman of the Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society. "The government can never come up with the perfect system."

Guidelines for unrequested cases, such as the irreversibly comatose and severely deformed newborns as well as cases involving psychiatric patients, require physicians to follow extra precautions.

Doctors must first indicate why the patient was unable to request euthanasia, and then justify the procedure. Physicians must also show that they had consulted with the patients' family.

In cases involving psychiatric patients where lucidity is in question, doctors must also list whether there are available alternatives to euthanasia.

Researchers identify cells targeted by bacteria that causes ulcers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cells in people with type O blood are favourite targets of the bacteria that cause ulcers and are linked to stomach cancer, researchers find. The discovery could lead to new ulcer drugs and help explain why type O people get more stomach disease.

Dr. Thomas Boren of Washington University School of Medicine said that test tube studies show that the bacteria Helicobacter Pylori, which is believed to cause ulcers, prefers to attack cells that have on their surface the antigen that defines the O blood type.

Dr. Boren said that the bacterium attaches to the antigen and then is taken into the cell. This leads to a chronic infection and an inflammation that has been associated with ulcers. The chronic infection also has been linked to stomach cancer, he said.

A report on the study was published in the journal science.

Dr. Boren said that the type O antigen acts as a linkage point, or receptor, for the bacteria. The antigen is found on the surface of red blood cells and on the surface of cells in the tissue that lines the stomach.

Antigens, or bacteria receptors, on the red blood cells and stomach tissue cells in people with blood type A, B and AB have a different chemistry, said Dr. Boren, and Helicobacter Pylori avoids those receptors.

"As a result, the level of H. Pylori receptors for these individuals will be reduced compared to those with type O receptors," said Mr. Boren. "It is not 100 per cent, but it is enough to cause an over representation of ulcers among blood group O individuals."

Ulcers are estimated to be 1.5 to 2 times more common among people with type O blood. Dr. Boren said his group also found that human breast milk contains another antigen that blocks

the attachment of Helicobacter Pylori to human cells. The researchers now are in the process of using this breast milk antigen to develop a drug that would inhibit the infection.

Dr. Boren said it will be several years before the drug can be tested in humans.

Helicobacter Pylori is a bacteria that infects humans worldwide. In the United States, about 20 per cent of the population is infected by age 20. In many Third World countries, about 80 per cent of people are in-

fectured by the age of 10. Those countries also have the world's highest rates of stomach cancer, said Dr. Boren.

"The longer they carry this infection around, the longer time they have a chance to keep this inflammation going and the earlier onset of cancer they will have," he said. "In the United States, stomach cancer is actually declining."

Science, which published the study, is the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

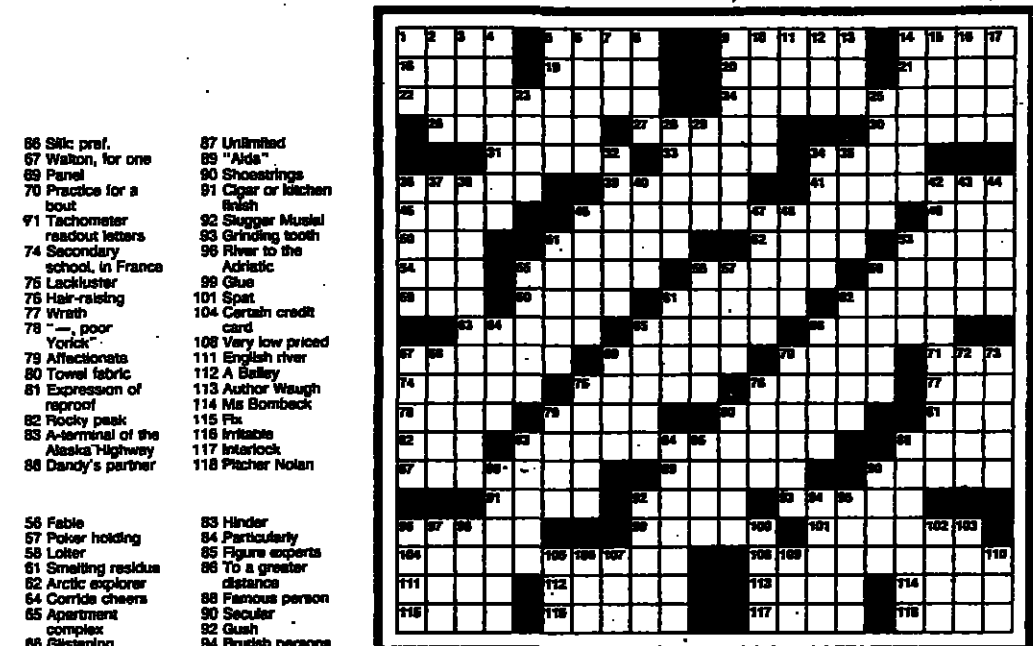
D.C. LINGO
By Harvey Chew

- ACROSS
- 1 "The Love"
 - 2 Type of bag?
 - 3 Chess endings
 - 4 Italian invasion
 - 5 Id.
 - 6 Chess
 - 7 Shortage
 - 8 Zola
 - 9 Soccer snack
 - 10 License size?
 - 11 Shagging wags?
 - 12 Partner of Jack
 - 13 Street urinal
 - 14 Little hero
 - 15 High IQ group
 - 16 Campus feature
 - 17 Depressed
 - 18 Tree
 - 19 Disfranchised
 - 20 Leave the — paths of men (Shelley)

- DOWN
- 1 Damned
 - 2 Biblical prophet
 - 3 Beer
 - 4 Mothers earned
 - 5 Greek physician
 - 6 Broccoli
 - 7 Collection of anecdotes
 - 8 City
 - 9 Act as a go-between
 - 10 Ed.
 - 11 Musical
 - 12 Contraction
 - 13 Wapiti
 - 14 Champagne word
 - 15 Produced, as a play
 - 16 Broadway hit
 - 17 Small port
 - 18 Molecule

- Diagrams: 21 x 21, By James Barrick
- 1 Thee
 - 2 Great
 - 3 Health
 - 4 Goodbye
 - 5 I am an
 - 6 I am on
 - 7 I am on
 - 8 I am on
 - 9 I am on
 - 10 I am on
 - 11 I am on
 - 12 I am on
 - 13 I am on
 - 14 I am on
 - 15 I am on
 - 16 I am on
 - 17 I am on
 - 18 I am on
 - 19 I am on
 - 20 I am on
 - 21 I am on

- DOWN
- 1 Meerschaum and
 - 2 — matter
 - 3 Airplane part
 - 4 Brits' "Jana"
 - 5 Chess
 - 6 Strip up
 - 7 Deliver a speech
 - 8 Sheep
 - 9 No
 - 10 — harmonic
 - 11 Angry fit
 - 12 "The Sound of —"
 - 13 Comp. pt.



Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Dangerous, dangerous, dangerous! To those who live in the dark about what's going to happen to these cases.
2. Report political placers! Don't let me see; don't let me see; don't let me see!
3. Was it Yogi Berra who once said: "That could be de la van all over again?"
4. Warm winter sunshine threatened door snowman.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. COME GHSIE TUFMN PHIGUUV IGUNM
PLEEMJKEFI VORSEMY MEM BUN L
BQNGNR CHEW, OM JEFUGVBLQE
CHEWMY TLV.

—By Rita Salve

2. BPO IVF NIKME SPTXT PVM FPBBIX IX
SUMIE FMBA—I NAK FPBPPE PQ SEMIE
SUMNTM QPH IV MOXHI FAEM.

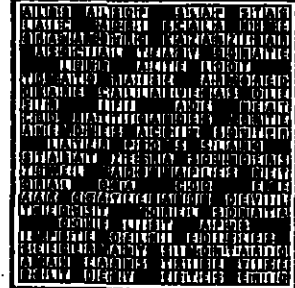
—By Duane H. McGary

3. RX ARGUED, ERKD KXZS SHEARUS HY
XUHDYSE SHEARGUED HE YR UDNE
ANGED XRU ARNUED AGUEDE.

—By Eugene T. Maloska

4. FUWM 'SWV BYRM AMTITO MULET
BWSLAR FLIOR: 'MYST FLAVOR WEE
UTTER?

—By Ed Hordeloon



سورة الفاتحة

Paris prizes its proud past with profusion of plaques

By Lee Yanowitch
Reuter

PARIS — Beneath the layers of soot that blanket the buildings of Paris, tourists and history enthusiasts may spot one of thousands of stone plaques which honour those who have lived or died in the city.

They mark the street in the Latin Quarter where Picasso painted his greatest masterpiece, the house on Rue Saint Honore from where Maximilien Robespierre reigned over the French revolutionary terror until his own death at the guillotine in 1794.

Scrolling along the Quai Voltaire near the River Seine, the visitor may glance up at number 27 and see it marks where the great philosopher was born in 1694, and died 84 years later.

Thousands of commemorative plaques mark the sites where writers, artists and generals spent anything from a single night to a lifetime.

"Maybe it is typically French, this desire pay homage to their heroes," said Nadine Robert of the city's Office of Monuments.

The plaques celebrate the city and its history.

At least three are dedicated to Frederic Chopin, among them one at 12 Place Vendome where the composer suffered for months before dying of tuberculosis on Oct. 17, 1849.

Seven pay homage to Victor Hugo, one of them — laid by an association called the Hugophiles at 30 Rue du Dra-

gon — marks a building he is said to have merely passed through at the age of 19.

Oscar Wilde has several dedicated to him, one on the facade of an hotel on Rue des Beaux Arts where, poverty-stricken and publicly shamed, he died on Nov. 20, 1900.

French 19th-century writer Guy de Maupassant, who went mad towards the end of his life, received hospital treatment in what is now the Turkish embassy.

On the Quai D'Anjou, on the Ile Saint Louis, words carved into a blackened facade remind passers-by of where the ill-fated mediaeval lovers, Abelard and Heloise, held a secret rendezvous.

A monk who fell in love with the daughter of an aristocrat, Abelard was castrated as a punishment and Heloise locked herself away in a nunnery until her death.

A complex procedure is required to put up a commemorative sign and many never reach the public.

The writer Louis-Ferdinand Celine, for example, was denied a plaque because of his collaboration with the occupying Nazis in World War II. Officials decreed that a memorial to him could disrupt public order.

"We also must be careful about the wording we use," Mr. Robert said. "For instance, we can no longer say 'the Germans' when mentioning the war, we have to say 'the Nazis', because today's Germany has nothing to do with the Nazis."

Yet a few stones hurriedly

engraved in the wake of the Nazi occupation still bear hostile wording. One on the Rue des Petites Ecuries, erected in 1948, reads: "On May 10, 1942, on this site, Maurice Fekerman... Alias Fifi, aged 21 years, was savagely murdered by boche (German) bullets."

The subject has become especially touchy in the approach to next year's 50th anniversary of the liberation of Paris. City officials are making sure that anyone who deserves a plaque and does not already have one, gets one.

Letters from descendants of deportees or resistance fighters pour into Mr. Robert's office, reporting stolen or smashed plaques or demanding that ancestors receive the tribute they deserve.

A recent letter alerted Mr. Robert to the disappearance of a plaque from the former Gestapo headquarters at 42, Rue Bassano, listing the names of resistance members tortured there.

"The building was sold to a Dutchman. Foreign owners just don't want any trouble," she said. "As soon as you remind people of that part of history, the extreme right uses the opportunity to cover the facade with graffiti."

In Mr. Robert's office, names such as Flaubert, Balzac and Rousseau are scrawled on hundreds of files stuffed into towering bookcases in a chaotic reminder of Paris's glorious past.

"There is an element of navel-gazing in it all," she says. "I mean, we could put a plaque on every building in Paris."

Where Michael Jackson leads

By Bryan Appleyard



A sometime ago, at the Oxford Union, I defended the motion, "This House believes high culture is superior to popular culture." Piece of cake. I prefer Shakespeare to East Enders and Mozart to Shabba Ranks; I am unmoved by Madonna and left stone cold by U2. The occasional sneer at the posturing, undifferentiated mass of "pop" culture is both a duty and a pleasure — statistically one is unlikely to miss anything of value.

Yet I was supposed to be on the opposite side. The motion was originally, "This House believes there is no such thing as popular culture." Since this was as palpably false as the new motion is self-evidently true, I was as happy then to oppose as I am now to propose. This man, you might think, will do anything for a night at the Randolph hotel.

I am now thought to be a turncoat. Both motions were intended to divide the Old Farts from the Young Smarts, and the latter had me down as one of them. The OFs are the mandarins and the academics with their set texts, their grand opera and their Great Tradition; the YSs are the media and cultural studies types with their semiotics and structuralism, pre- and post- their computer games and their American — not French — movies.

The conflict is symmetrical since both factions are equally wrong. It is also important beyond the confines of Oxford, first because it raises the crucial issue of what, if anything, is worth saving from the continuing fragmentation of the culture and, second, because it directly affects what is taught in schools and universities.

The now fraught distinction between "high" and "popular" culture is based on fear and impatience. The fear is that of the OFs who wish to establish and preserve a realm of standards, traditions and artistic forms. The impatience is that of the YSs who see no virtue in such rigidities and find as much or more to savour and contemplate in the less self-conscious realm of mass expression and entertainment.

The basis of the fear is sound. Europe and, latterly, the United States have been responsible for an artistic tradition that is without compare in human history. Writing off Michelangelo, Flaubert or Degas because they are dead, white, European males, because they are part of a capitalist/colonialist canon or because they are "irrelevant" is too stupid to consider. The fact that their work was made possible by the development of crafts and insights that were sustained by a continuity of tradition means that abandoning the tradition is as gross an act of vandalism as slashing a painting or burning a book.

Yet from the 19th century onwards the fear of this vandalism grew. Mass culture drove the defenders of continuity, from Matthew Arnold to F.R. Leavis, to an ever-more paranoid assertion of the need for an inner cultural priesthood that would protect the highest and the best from the lowest and the worst. In part this was a fear of democracy, secularism and mass education. Artistic greatness was seen to be too fine, too subtle and too important for general consumption.

It embodied qualities that could not compete with the faster, sharper, sweeter pleasures of the masses.

The aesthetes' response was to withdraw into art, to say that it was a luxury for the finer sensibilities but not obligatory for the rest. The moralists, however, could only be content with an absolute insistence that high art was the ultimate distillation and protector of human values. Even if you did not want it, you must accept its authority.

The impatience that spawned the YSs grew initially from the sense that this was all too transparently self-seeking — jobs for the boys as cultural priests. This generated the cantankerous scepticism of the Fifties and was then intellectually underpinned by radical new critical and political movements in the Sixties and Seventies. The gist of this critical message was that the old cultural canon was an arbitrary, value-laden imposition; the reality of the modern world was a shifting mass of cultural systems in which a can of beans could be seen to be as replete with meaning as a Titian.

This appealed to young people who, by now, had been told that rebellion was the natural condition of their existence and whose most acute artistic experiences were more likely to have been derived from Bob Dylan or the Beatles than from Brahms. It appealed also to teachers in that the new discipline of cultural studies gave them a quasi-scientific status as opposed to the suspect mysticism of the old critical posture.

What has happened now — and the reason the Oxford debate is taking place — is that a generation that takes this radical cultural scepticism for granted is growing up and occupying positions of media, as opposed to merely academic, power. The magazine *The Modern Review* is based on the idea that low-brow art can be written about in a high-brow way, and the style has seeped into mainstream arts coverage. The general message is that the high culture emperor, clad in his mystifications and carefully cultivated "difficulties," is, in fact, naked.

This may be a true and healthy corrective. Few aesthetic postures can be as arid as that of the high art types who regard opera or novels as valuable simply because they are opera or novels, as opposed to, say, Hollywood movies. It is this kind of reflex snobbery that produces the unarticulated "literary" aspirations of the Booker Prize or the hermetic and incoherent ramblings of critical justifications in the visual arts. It is certainly true that there is more real art in a good Martin Scorsese movie, a vintage episode of *Cheers* or a fine song of Randy Newman's than in 98 per cent of the "literary" novels now published, new paintings exhibited, or new music composed.

But the mistake the YSs are making is to assume that popular expression is an entirely new phenomenon that requires a new critical justification and that the quality of these odd fragments of mass culture somehow undermines previous conceptions of excellence. The

opposite is the case. The reason any of us are able to detect this new excellence at all is because the culture has made us critically aware. As Clive James once said, the reason he likes Randy Newman is because he likes Verdi. The only way you can reach Newman's dazzling ironies is by being attuned to the possibility of such expression. In short, the high art/pop art antagonism is meaningless — because when pop is good it becomes high.

Pop, however, is easily glorified and commercially attractive. So its elevation to art will tend to be a conquest rather than an acceptance. Free the schools and colleges to teach what pop they like and Flaubert will be driven out. Chaos will ensue — indeed, has ensued in the United States and, to some extent, here. Turn education into a dim-witted wallow in the dislocated mire of cultural studies and the future will produce no Newman and no Cheers. It will produce deracinated weirdos such as Michael Jackson, the pathetic figure, lurching from burnt scalp to exotic skin and dental problems and now, apparently, painkiller addiction, without the faintest conception of who or what he is, and whose personal rock of stability appears to be Elizabeth Taylor. You can discuss this creature at length as a glittering pop emblem of the culture as a whole. But really he is no more than a wrecked victim of that culture, of pathological, but no aesthetic interest.

Turning popular culture into a cause, a guerrilla war against the old high cultural standards, courts this kind of freak show by encouraging the belief that going with the global electronic flow is somehow virtuous. In reality it is no more than a passive acceptance of what Raymond Williams, in perhaps his only memorable phrase, called "technological determinism." Technology is beginning to create a worldwide, 24-hour entertainment system that will embody and sell purely pop values. You may catch a glimpse of Randy Newman or Cheers, but mainly it will be Guns N' Roses and *The Word*. The high-brow pop view is that, equipped only with out-culture studies qualifications, we should dive into this morass and analyse like crazy in the brittle prose the form seems to require. But what they are really saying is: this is going to happen anyway so let's sit back and have some fun. Why worry? Why resist?

Cosmo Landesman, previewing the Oxford debate at the weekend said: "The motion before the Oxford Union may be carried — but I suspect it is too late to set the clock back to the age of Matthew Arnold and its simple cultural certainties." Describing the author of *Dover Beach* as possessed of "simple cultural certainties" is perverse, but I suspect Mr. Landesman is otherwise right. The OFs, with my help, will win, but the clock is unlikely to be turned back. But does he really want to be right? Has he considered the hell that is the technologically determined pop wallow? Does anybody seriously want to be Michael Jackson? — The Independent.

Electricity new weapon in Bosnian warfare

By Pierre Lhuillery
Agence France Presse

SARAJEVO — Electricity is increasingly becoming a political weapon in the war raging in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as lines are deliberately cut and repairs withheld in order to pressure opponents.

The Bosnian capital Sarajevo has been without power since Sunday. After one line was damaged on Dec. 20 during fighting on the Zuc hill and Bosnian Serbs on Christmas Day (Saturday) cut a second power supply.

It is not the first time in the long conflict that parts of the city have been deprived of power.

Commander Idesbald van Biesebroek, spokesman for the U.N. Protection Forces (UNPROFOR), said: "They really use electricity as a political weapon."

No electricity in Sarajevo means virtually no water, since

the pumping stations cannot work without power. And most of the telephones no longer function.

UNPROFOR is prepared to repair the line from Kakanj, northwest of Sarajevo, damaged in fighting on Dec. 20 when a pylon was destroyed on Zuc hill.

But the Bosnian Serbs have refused UNPROFOR specialists' permission to repair the line, giving no explanation.

As for the second line, which comes from the Visegrad plant in the east and close to the border with Serbia, "it was not due to shelling — (the Serbs) just turned the switch off," Mr. van Biesebroek said.

Exasperated, the majority-Muslim Bosnian government asked Bosnian Croat forces (HVO) in Kiseljak to cut a secondary power supply to the areas of Sarajevo occupied by Serbs, he added.

But when the HVO refused their request, Bosnian forces simply interrupted supplies to Kiseljak and the Serb areas in the capital on Sunday.

At the height of winter, Sarajevo now finds itself totally without power, while most of Kiseljak has also been plunged into darkness.

Hospitals are able to keep functioning thanks to their own generators and because fuel supplies recently made it through to the city.

General Francis Briquemont, commander of the U.N. forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has appealed to the warring parties to come to an agreement allowing UNPROFOR to repair the main power line into Sarajevo.

"It's absolutely a priority," said Mr. Biesebroek.

But he added that even if they were allowed to carry out repairs, it would still be several days before power was restored.

Stalemate in self-rule negotiations

(Continued from page 1)
reaching a compromise, according to Palestinian officials, concerned the area of territories that Israel would need to connect about 23 Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian officials said that Israel showed new flexibility to reduce the area of the territories that it will keep to connect the settlements to reinforce and ensure their security during the interim period. Israel had originally asked for around 36 kilometres in addition to the five square kilometres that the settlements occupy, amounting to a total of 10 per cent of the sprawling Strip's area.

No details were available about the proposed compromise in Gaza, but the reports underscored reinforced Palestinian criticism of the Palestinian negotiating strategy.

"The issue of the land is the most crucial. If the PLO accepts to relinquish one square metre of the land that Israel demands, then that will seriously jeopardise our legitimate claim to the occupied Palestinian territories," said Dr. Tayseer Arouri from the Palestine People's Party (PPP).

Dr. Arouri was expressing mounting concern that by

focusing all the attention on the control over the crossings the PLO might be ignoring the crucial issue of the settlements.

Western experts who know the Israeli scene well agree with Mr. Arouri's assessment that the PLO should concentrate its efforts to prevent Israel from using their security as a pretext to retain more land under the army's control.

But Mr. Arafat believes that control of the crossings is crucial to future Palestinian sovereignty. "I will not accept (a South African style) Bantustan," he is often quoted as saying in official and private meetings.

Some Palestinian and Western analysts, including some from within the PLO, disagree, pointing out that Mr. Arafat should not make a big fuss over the crossing points since Israel will not yield its control over the borders during the interim period.

Mr. Abbas who signed the autonomy accord with Israel on Sept. 13 in Washington, is said to differ with Mr. Arafat over the negotiating strategy. According to PLO officials, he has no illusions about the possibility of Palestinian control over the crossings.

But Mr. Arafat was able to

ally crucial support within the PLO Executive Committee and his Fateh movement for his negotiating demands in spite of rising criticism of the way he is handling the peace process.

There are two interpretations of why Mr. Arafat is holding to his guns: The first suggests that he is deliberately demanding Palestinian control over the crossings, but will later mellow in order not to yield to Israeli demands for keeping Palestinian territories. The second interpretation by his critics fears exactly the opposite tactic: that Mr. Arafat is focusing the attention on the crossing points to overshadow the concessions that he is ready to make regarding territories that Israel will keep "to maintain the security of the settlements."

The obvious failure of the Cairo talks is expected to place Mr. Arafat under pressure to reassess his negotiating strategy. The PLO has already agreed to meet a delegation representing a recently emerging reformist movement next week in Tunis. The delegation will be headed by Dr. Haidar Abdul Shaif, the chief Palestinian negotiator to the Washington peace talks.

Israel reports deal; Palestinians say no

(Continued from page 1)

Tuesday in a long session on talks that lasted until after midnight at a Cairo hotel. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa joined the negotiations for six hours, trying to help the two sides find compromises.

Mr. Arafat said the Palestinian negotiators for two hours in the middle of the night on his way to Tunis from Sudan. Immediately after he arrived home, the Executive Committee met and rejected the Israeli position.

"The Israeli side has gone back to insisting on total control and supervision of all crossings and bridges leading to the Gaza Strip and the area of Jericho from which the Israeli army will withdraw," the PLO statement said.

"This will make this withdrawal no more than a redeployment of Israeli forces in these areas and empty it of all meaning."

It said the PLO insisted on total Palestinian control of crossings into Gaza and Jericho, and both a Palestinian and an international presence alongside Israelis at crossings into other parts of the West Bank.

The PLO executive committee said it "blames the Israeli side for obstructing the current negotiations and failing to meet its obligation to keep to the deadlines for starting Israeli withdrawal from the areas of Gaza and Jericho and completing it by April 13, 1994."

In Amman, Palestinian Ambassador Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim said:

"The Israeli proposals do not even meet the minimum requirements of the Palestinians concerning the control of crossing points and the size of Jericho."

"The negotiations have not made progress despite Egypt's efforts to unblock the situation," said Mr. Abdul Rahim early Wednesday. "Any information about a draft accord between the two sides is totally groundless."

Mr. Abdul Rahim said the Israelis had proposed a solution for "only one crossing point with Jordan, the (King) Hussein Bridge."

"One passage is to be under Israeli control and another Palestinian, but without Jericho being linked. That amounts to total Israeli control," he complained.

For the Jericho region, Israel proposed autonomy for 60 square kilometres, up from an original 27 square kilometres but far below the PLO's initial demand for 365 square kilometres.

King Fahd opens Shura Council

(Continued from page 1)

The king named 210 members of provincial councils on Sept. 19.

The political reforms were encouraged by the United States, which sent 500,000 troops to Saudi Arabia to lead an international military coalition

that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.

Diplomats say the Shura Council represents the various sectors of Saudi society and the appointments were well received by the Saudi people.

They add that some of the rules governing the Shura fall

short of Western concepts of democracy, but nevertheless it represents a big step forward.

The council is the first in Saudi Arabia in 60 years. The kingdom had a short-lived similar experience when it was set up in 1932.

The council, which will not hold public sessions, is the first

institution giving citizens a say in the affairs of Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter.

Senior members of the royal family have traditionally controlled the vast oil wealth, huge foreign assets and political and military affairs of the kingdom of 17 million.

Diplomats say the need for change became more pressing after the 1991 Gulf war.

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World oil prices hit new 5-year low

LONDON (R) — The world price of crude oil fell to a new five-year low Wednesday, extended 1993's recession-led collapse.

London February futures for the world benchmark Brent Blend of crude oil opened after a four-day Christmas holiday break at \$13.25 per barrel, the lowest since November 1988.

The price this year is down from around \$20. Allowing for inflation, it is now scarcely higher than at the time of the 1973 Arab oil embargo.

Recession has crimped demand for petroleum even as output from new fields in the Anglo-Norwegian North Sea has hit a record 5.0 million barrels daily.

Western industry analysts said that Saudi Arabia was refusing to lead a new round of output by OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) unless non-OPEC producers also helped to curb excess supply.

But an Arab oil envoy, Oil Minister Said bin Ahmad Al Shanab, said OPEC ended talks in Norway Tuesday without any pledge by that country to curb its North Sea sales.

Norwegian industry and Energy Minister Jens Stoltenberg said that "under the present circumstances we will not undertake any measures to restrict our production."

"OPEC is the cartel and OPEC has the main responsibility for exercising production restraints," Mr. Stoltenberg said.

Some brokers say that prices in the thin, holiday-season market might not be representative.

Brent futures dropped as low as \$13.23 early trading Wednesday, down more than 40 cents from before Christmas. But they held around these levels and later tried to edge higher.

Any real recovery, however, unless there is a truly Arctic winter in Europe and the United States, is likely to depend on production cuts.

"We have to see who blinks first — the Saudis or Norway," one European trader said.

Energy economists say that cheap oil may help fire up a weak global economy, although consumers don't always enjoy a break at the pump.

Gasoline is selling at bargain basement prices in the United States. But elsewhere, governments tend simply to slap on new fuels taxes.

China to unify exchange rate from Jan. 1

BEIJING (AFP) — China is to introduce a unified, floating foreign exchange rate from Jan. 1 next year, replacing the existing dual-rate system, the People's Bank of China said Wednesday.

The unified rate will be based on market demand and supply — meaning the cancellation of the yuan's official exchange rate and its flotation against a basket of currencies — but will still be subject to administrative control, the central bank said.

The Chinese yuan is officially fixed at around 5.80 to the dollar but the rate rises to about 8.60 on the black market and is hovering around 8.70 on swap markets, used by enterprises seeking to balance foreign exchange needs.

Central bank officials have said since September that a unified rate would be established in early 1994 as part of moves aimed at eventually achieving full convertibility.

The currency is currently dominated in non-exchangeable renminbi and foreign exchange certificates (FEC), introduced in 1979 and convertible at the official rate.

Central bank deputy gov-

ernor Zhou Zhengqing said on Wednesday's evening television news that the bank would cease to issue FEC after Jan. 1 and the currency would gradually be removed from circulation.

Its demise will be welcomed by foreigners who regard being obliged to use a separate — and more expensive — currency for certain transactions as discriminatory.

Wednesday's announcement, carried by Xinhua News Agency, did not specify the initial level of the new unified exchange rate but foreign bankers here believe it will near the swap rate.

They said unification would have no severe impact on China's economy, noting that 80 per cent of foreign trade transactions were already done at the swap rate.

"The official rate now plays a very minor role in the economy, so I don't think the abolition itself will lead to strong inflationary effects," said one banker. "But if the swap rate depreciates, then that will create pressures."

China was quick to plug the move's benefits for foreigners, with minister for foreign trade

and investment Wu Yi saying it would remove problems caused by businessmen having to calculate their investment in yuan at the official rate but repatriate their profits at the swap rate.

The Chinese authorities are willing to lose the income from this indirect FEC tax if it means clearing away this disincentive to investment, bankers say.

"It will do a lot to make them look less like a Mickey Mouse economy" in international eyes, particularly those of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which Beijing is seeking to rejoin, said one economist.

Mr. Wu said the unification was a breakthrough in bringing China's trade system in line with international practice and would play "a positive role" in Beijing's GATT application.

But bankers emphasised strong administrative controls would remain, with China still some years off becoming a mature economy with the macro-economic regulation needed for the move to full convertibility.

Unification is a step in the right direction but must be

followed up with moves to allow freedom in commercial transactions and eventually financial transaction — undertakings made by a number of GATT members without fully convertible currencies, they say.

In a recent interview with the Far Eastern Economic Review, central bank governor and vice premier Zhu Rongji said the renminbi would initially become convertible in the current account, including foreign trade.

China has set itself a five-year timetable for convertibility.

Black marketeers here played down the impact of currency unification on their business. "It won't make any difference, we can always give a better rate," said one, expressing a sentiment shared by economists.

"As long as there is some government control, black markets will exist," said one. "They will exist anyway for individuals wanting hard currency. How much the rate will diverge will depend on the extent of government intervention to control the market rate."

Arab firm arranging travel cheque payment system

MANAMA (R) — An Arab financial services firm, hit by U.S. sanctions against Libya, is creating a mechanism for paying holders of its travellers' cheques abroad, a spokesman said Wednesday.

"Arab Financial Services (AFS) is in a sound position financially and will meet all outstanding travellers' cheques obligations," a spokesman for AFS's public relations firm Gulf Hill and Knowlton said.

"It will do so once it has established the mechanism of payment," he said, adding "details on these will be issued in a few days."

The U.S. Treasury has classified AFS, one of the main issuers of travellers' cheques in the Arab World, as Libyan. It froze its U.S. assets, forcing the company to suspend its dollar travellers' cheque and credit card operations.

A banking source close to AFS told Reuters the firm was making arrangements to pay AFS cheques abroad, which included opening private bank accounts to help travellers cash all on part of their cheques.

"They are going to sort it out. They are in process of making arrangements," the source said. AFS officials were unavailable for comment.

The U.S. move followed a U.N. Security Council resolution to freeze Libyan financial assets from Dec. 1 over the

1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Bahrain authorities have defended the firm and criticised the United States for freezing its assets on the basis that AFS was owned and controlled by Libyans.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY DECEMBER 30, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A day to sit back and observe the progress you have made and to get clear on just what it is that others seem to be expecting from you. You have every opportunity now to express your talents.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Make it a point to get together with the most individual you know and work out business and civic affairs efficiently so that you get approval of all quickly.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Getting personal matters handled properly is very important now. Go to key people and come to a perfect understanding about any situation.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can start an uprising in all of your affairs and get the admiration of those you love by having private talks with authorities and experts who give ideas for early advancement.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Associates and allies are very helpful now in showing you how to advance more quickly. Listen carefully and follow through with ideas, thereby gaining prestige and good will as well.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can gain prestige and promotion if you are particularly careful in handling your particular task since higher-ups will be watching your progress.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are highly inspired how to get your wishes today, so

be sure to carry through with ideas. Think better of others, be amusing, accept invitations extended kindly.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You will be impressed with how seriously others take their tasks and opportunities to advance, so see that you follow example for success.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get shopping done in the company of wise friends and also be sure you confer with associates in order to work out a better method of operating in joint interests.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Endeavour to find simpler methods that will also mean economy and you will be more successful, efficient in the future.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It is important to do something nice for others now so that they will like and appreciate you more. Entertain them in the way they like best and be happy yourself.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take every opportunity today to show that you are devoted to them even though it is necessary that you be out in the business world so much of the time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) An ideal day to be with allies to thresh out mutual problems. Telephone or correspond with those not easily available to you on a personal basis.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY DECEMBER 31, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Carry through with a course of action that has proven satisfactory in the past and resist an urge to change present arrangements by which you have enjoyed success and a degree of happiness.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Make sure you contact close ties before night falls to get their aid and ideas for completing vital personal affairs that you must get finished.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Day hours give you every opportunity to quietly learn from authorities what they are willing to do to assist in your personal and career aspirations.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can start a whole new uprising in your affairs by searching your paper and other good printed media for ideas and information to get ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) The future can be brighter and easier if you adopt more modern systems in personal, business and civic endeavours you wish to participate in.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) By attending to services and duties you will be inspired how to deal with partners and other important ties more wisely for your future advancement.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be of service and inspiration to others during day hours. Then be sure to get out with

finest associates in the evening for a really wonderful time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Important to show real affection for those you love now and live in such a way that you become an inspiration for them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be certain until the sun sets that you follow the suggestions of close ties so that the future can be more harmonious to those you really care about.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Before luncheon is the best time to call others and discuss with them what you have in mind to bring success to all that are participating.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Bring to mind the finest tenets under which you were reared and by combining them with your own proven philosophy, the future can be brighter.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Show that you are capable of raising level of consciousness during the morning and become an inspiration to others by your example of success.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Meditation at services of your choice or in the quiet of your room will help you to plan the future more wisely in accord with modern methods.

Company says Euro Disney is a financial disappointment

LOS ANGELES (R) — The performance of the Euro Disneyland Theme Park outside Paris is dreadful and has become the "first real financial disappointment" for the Walt Disney Co., Chairman Michael Eisner said Tuesday in the annual report.

Mr. Eisner pulled no punches in discussing the performance of the park, 32 kilometres east of Paris.

"Some would call it dreadful, and in a financial sense, I would be forced to agree," he said.

"This has been a very serious problem, one that has cost an enormous amount of time and anxiety," he added.

"This past year presented a few new challenges, namely our first real financial disappointment: Euro Disney," he said.

Since Euro Disneyland opened on April 12, 1992, it

has been repeatedly criticised by the French. The company has been accused of trying to take over Europe with cheap American culture, and one critic called the park a "cultural Chernobyl."

Euro Disneyland's parent company, Euro Disney SCA, is 49 per cent owned by Walt Disney Co.

Mr. Eisner had some positive things to say about the park. Its hotels, he said, "are great."

Attendance levels are "acceptable" and exit interviews indicate visitors love the park, he said. Euro Disneyland had 17 million guests in its first 18 months.

Disney remains committed to exploring all reasonable alternatives to help put Euro Disney on sound financial footing, Mr. Eisner said.

But the company will not let

the park jeopardise its financial health, he said.

"We certainly are interested in aiding Euro Disney SCA, the public company that bears our name and reputation," Mr. Eisner said. "We will deal in good faith with our fellow Euro Disney shareholders and Euro Disney creditors."

"But in doing so, I promise all shareholders of the Walt Disney Co. that we will take no action to endanger the health of Disney itself," he said.

In the 1993 fiscal year ended Sept. 30, Euro Disney had a loss of about \$900 million.

Euro Disney and Disney are engaged in talks with bankers in an effort to restructure the French company's debt. The companies have declined to provide details of the options under discussion. Disney has said it hopes to have a restructuring in place by April and will announce its plans then.

Recovery in Canada expected to strengthen in '94 and '95

OTTAWA (R) — A moderate recovery in Canada is expected to strengthen in 1994 and 1995 but the economy will still perform below its potential, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has said.

Canadian exports, hitting record highs this year, are likely to continue to grow rapidly but demand at home will progress slowly, the Paris-based think-tank said in its year-end econo-

mic outlook. It projected economic growth of 3.7 per cent next year and 4.1 per cent in 1995, compared with 2.5 per cent this year.

Any drop in the unemployment rate will be slow, keeping wage growth and inflation low. Improvements in the trade surplus are expected to be partly offset by a rising deficit on invisible trade as Canada meets its growing debt servicing commitments.

The OECD said that slow progress in budget consolidation could limit the scope for declining lending rates and the narrowing of interest rate differentials with the United States. That in turn might slow the momentum of the recovery.

"The recovery also remains at risk if export market growth turns out to be weaker than expected," the forum for leading industrial nations said.

Indian foreign exchange reserves hit record high

BOMBAY (R) — Indian gold and foreign exchange reserves have hit a record high of \$13 billion, a turnaround that bankers say reflects the improved economic outlook for the world's 12th largest economy as it heads into 1994.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Wednesday said the country's gold and foreign currency reserves had reached a record \$13.01 billion on Dec. 17, up from \$8.9 billion a year ago.

Bankers said the Reserve Bank of India was taking in up to \$100 million a day as part of its decision to hold the rupee at 31.37 to the dollar. Strong dollar inflows are keeping the rupee buoyant.

On the day the government faced demands in parliament for the resignation of Finance Minister Manmohan Singh for failing to prevent last year's securities scandal, bankers and economists said the improved health of the economy reflected the liberalisation policies of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

"The overall economy is moving out of recession. The underlying trend is buoyant," said Narayanan Vaghul, chairman of ICICI Ltd., a leading Indian financial institution.

But he said some core sectors such as steel and cement, which were dependent on government expenditure, remained depressed because of spending cutbacks.

The government projects growth in real gross domestic product in the current fiscal year, ending in March, at 4.5 per cent, up from 4.0 per cent last year and 1.3 per cent in 1991/92.

India's economic reforms have started strongly attracting the attention of overseas investors, with \$3.0 billion in investment approvals notched up since Mr. Rao took power, against a tenth of that in the preceding year.

The Association of Indian Automobile Manufacturers said that it expected car output to set a record in 1993/94, while leading businessmen are hoping the government will help boost the economy by cutting corporate taxes and coming national budget in February.

Major companies have seen profits pick up sharply in the first six months of fiscal 1993/94.

"The recession which dogged them for the last two years is a thing of the past. And if further tax cuts come on the next budget, industrial growth may reach nine per cent in the next year," Basudeb Sen, general manager for research and planning of the Unit Trust of India, the country's largest mutual fund, said in an interview.

In 1993/94 the government is talking of 4.5 per cent industrial growth, against 1.5 per cent in 1991/92.

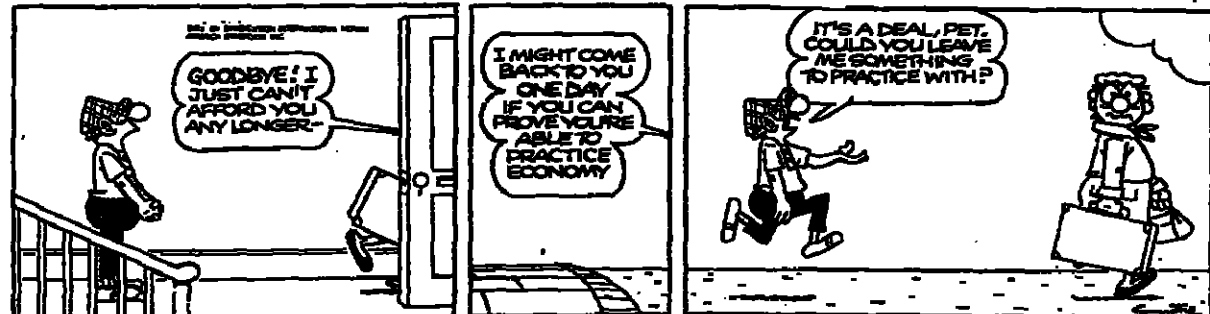
The country's foreign exchange reserves have improved continuously since India embarked on a radical market-oriented economic reform programme in mid-1991, dismantling its decades-old socialist policy.

Reserves hit a recent low of \$4.6 billion in August 1991, just after Mr. Rao's government had taken over during an acute balance-of-payments crisis.

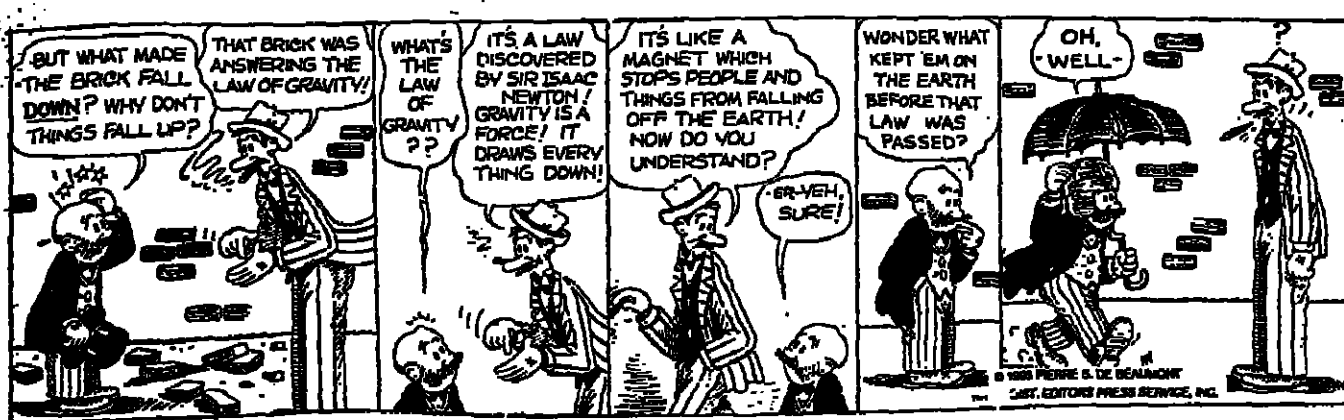
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



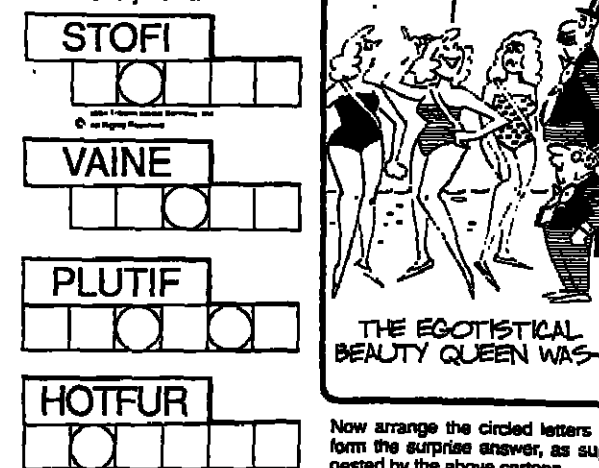
THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

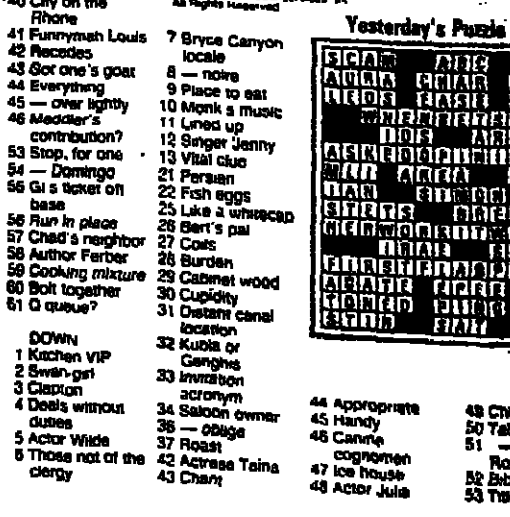
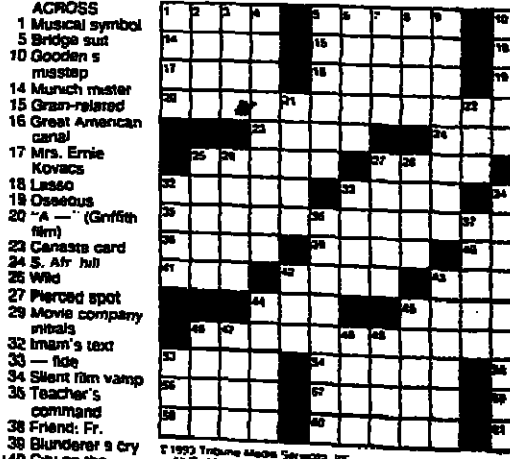


Print answer here: AN " " " " " " (Answers on Saturday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: CREEK, ABBOT, NAPKIN, UNFOLD. Answer: What the bald producer podder ended up with — A BAKED BEAN.

THE Daily Crossword

by Raymond Hamel



Japan firms spend \$540m for unknown aims

TOKYO (R) — Tax authorities said Wednesday Japanese companies had spent a record \$540 million (¥540 billion) for unspecified purposes in the year to June 1993.

A survey of the top 4,900 firms conducted by the National Tax Administration Agency showed that about 550 com-

panies did not specify how the money was spent.

It was a 6.6 per cent rise in this category from the previous year, the agency said.

Construction companies accounted for 43.8 billion yen (\$390 million) — or about three quarters of the total "dubious" spending, the agency

said giving no further details.

Analysts say the unspecified spending on record is only a small part of far larger amounts of dubious financing.

In a growing contracts-for-cash scandal, state prosecutors have arrested more than 30 construction industry executives, two regional governors

and two big-city mayors.

There has been intense speculation that prosecutors, bolstered last month by the appointment of an anti-corruption warrior as prosecutor-general, are poised to go after the "fat cats" — major politicians — in what could become Japan's biggest post-war bribery scandal.

Iraq relaxes foreign exchange controls

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, suffering from a chronic shortage of foreign currency, is encouraging its people to save their hard cash in state banks.

Iraq's central bank, in a bid to lessen demand for foreign exchange and prop up the sinking dinar, is taking steps to liberalise foreign exchange dealing and the circulation and possession of hard cash.

Legally, Iraqis are now allowed to openly deal in foreign exchange and open foreign cash accounts in Iraqi banks.

The authorities now tolerate more than ever before money changers who, though not yet legalised, strike open deals with traders.

The central bank issued last week licences to 28 firms set up to buy and sell foreign currency. But the firms have not yet started their operations.

When these companies start business, it will be the first official recognition of the dinar's black market rate which on Wednesday stood at 138 per U.S. dollar. The dinar's official

rate is \$3.2.

In an interview with the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah this week, an official central bank source urged Iraqis to overcome their fears about foreign cash dealings.

"It has been decided to permit citizens to deposit and withdraw from their foreign money accounts without any restrictions and questioning on the sources of the money," the

paper said, quoting the central bank official.

Iraq's government has allowed its ministries and offices to strike deals in hard currency with the private sector, a move it hopes will hold down spiralling prices and curb a plunge in the value of the dinar.

The central bank is also calling on Iraqis with accounts abroad to transfer their money

to Iraqi banks, promising

equal privileges. Iraq's authorities have commented on whether the unprecedented measures, including any positive impact on the economy, will be enough to punish Iraq for its

invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Baghdad traders would rather trade in dollars than deposit in government banks.

JEA plans to boost power generation

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Electric Authority (JEA) has embarked on the second phase of Aqaba Thermal Power Station's extension, with the aim of boosting power generation, according to JEA Director General Mohammad Said Arafeh.

Mr. Arafeh said the JEA floated four tenders in September and October to provide steam boilers, steam turbines, fuel reservoirs and carry out civil works.

The new extension involves adding two new power generation units operated by heavy fuel. The two generating units will be operational in the middle of 1997, according to Mr. Arafeh.

The tenders will be offered to the best bidders before the end of 1995. Work on the first generation unit will take 31 months, while work on the second unit will take 33 months, according to the JEA director general.

He pointed out that the authority has decided to select an international consulting company to carry out the engineering works. By doing so, the company seeks to benefit from the experiences of such a company by training the company's technical cadre.

On the project's finance, Mr. Arafeh said the government has approached international and Arab funds and some friendly countries to provide the necessary funds.

A delegation from the Arab Economic and Social Development Fund has recently visited Jordan and showed interest in financing the project.

Mr. Arafeh described this extension as vital to meeting the increasing demand for electric power, which resulted from the improvement of economic performance and increased investments. The demand for electricity increased by 2.7 per cent in 1991, and then jumped to 10 per cent to 1993, Mr. Arafeh said.

Yugoslav National Bank redenominates dinar

BELGRADE (R) — The Yugoslav National Bank, facing record hyperinflation which renders currency worthless within days of issue, Wednesday chopped nine zeroes off the dinar, the Politika newspaper said.

The decision to redenominate the dinar had been expected to go into effect on Jan. 1, but imminent new year holidays and monthly wage and pension payments prompted the bank to bring the move forward by three days, Politika said.

A one billion dinar note will be counted as one dinar.

On the black market, the only one that counts, the dinar is currently worth about 1,100 billion to the dollar.

The last time the central bank knocked zeroes off the dinar was on Oct. 1, when six noughts were dropped.

The central bank had issued a flurry of new banknotes over the last six months in a losing struggle against galloping inflation that has reached mind-boggling levels.

Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 28/12/93	Tokyo Close Date 29/12/93
Sterling Pound	1.5080	1.5058
Deutsche Mark	1.6995	1.7050
Swiss Franc	1.4390	1.4415
French Franc	5.7919	5.8045**
Japanese Yen	111.40	111.80
European Currency Unit	1.1373	1.1339**

** USD Per STG

** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.25	3.25	3.37	3.68
Sterling Pound	5.37	5.25	5.18	5.06
Deutsche Mark	6.31	6.00	5.62	5.18
Swiss Franc	4.31	4.06	3.83	3.59
French Franc	6.56	6.37	6.00	5.50
Japanese Yen	2.34	2.06	1.93	1.81
European Currency Unit	6.70	6.31	6.00	5.53

Interbank bid rates for accounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7020	0.7040
Sterling Pound	1.0556	1.0609
Deutsche Mark	0.4112	0.4133
Swiss Franc	0.4866	0.4890
French Franc	0.1208	0.1214
Japanese Yen*	0.0276	0.0307
Dutch Guilder	0.3667	0.3685
Swedish Krona	0.0418	0.0420
Italian Lira*	0.0418	0.0420
Belgian Franc	0.0418	0.0420

* Per 100

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8350	1.8600
Lebanese Lira*	0.040550	0.040175
Saudi Riyal	0.1850	0.1882
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2260	2.3220
Qatari Riyal	0.1899	0.1913
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2220
Omani Riyal	1.7850	1.7920
UAE Dirham	0.1899	0.1913
Greek Drachma*	0.2830	0.3150
Cypriot Pound	1.3480	1.3850

* Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3330/40	Canadian dollar
	1.7050/60	Deutschemarks
	1.9096/06	Dutch guilders
	1.4406/16	Swiss francs
	35.44/48	Belgian francs
	5.8040/90	French francs
	1689.1/0.6	Italian lire
	111.59/69	Japanese yen
	8.2330/30	Swedish crowns
	7.3900/30	Norwegian crowns
	6.6533/83	Danish crowns
	\$1.5011/21	
One sterling		
One ounce of gold	\$384.50/385.00	

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Evacuees take hard road to freedom from besieged Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (R) — Hundreds of civilians evacuated from besieged Sarajevo endured a cold and uncomfortable night on the road to freedom Wednesday.

Having finally won permission from the warring parties to pass through the battle lines around the Bosnian capital, the evacuees' journey on a fleet of ramshackle coaches was held up by fuel shortages and mechanical breakdowns.

United Nations officials said about 1,000 women, children and elderly men had left Sarajevo and were heading either for Croatia or Serbia after their evacuation had been delayed for months by haggling between Serb and Muslim authorities.

The convoy to Split (on Croatia's Adriatic coast) discovered it didn't have enough gasoline and that it needed another bus to carry all the people," said Ray Wilkinson, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Fuel and another bus eventually materialised and the 16-bus convoy set off from the Serb-held district of Lukavica, its first staging post just outside Sarajevo, at 4:00 a.m. Wednesday morning, he said.

The convoy was later reported to have suffered two more punctures en route, but was pressing on.

"Everyone spent an extremely uncomfortable night huddled together on the bus for warmth," Mr. Wilkinson added.

Evacuees said they had been forced to leave Sarajevo because they lacked food and electricity.

One mother said: "I'm leaving Sarajevo only to save my children. The best place to live in the world is Sarajevo and I'm going to come back as soon as the war is finished."

As they left, Muslim authorities in another besieged Bosnian city, Mostar, issued an urgent appeal for food aid, fuel and medicine.

The Muslim-controlled radio said late Tuesday that Mostar's 55,000 trapped Muslims had not received any food for 20 days, but the United Nations in Sarajevo denied the claim.

Mr. Wilkinson said that between Dec. 1 and 16, there were four convoys to the Muslim and Croat sides of Mostar, with the Muslims getting 257 tonnes of food.

There had been no convoys

since Dec. 16 but one was scheduled for Wednesday with 52 tonnes of flour and mixed foodstuffs.

"The situation is still very bad, but to suggest they (East Mostar) have not received anything for 20 days is not really true," he said.

The radio said people had started eating wild vegetables and grasses and indicated food poisoning was rampant in the eastern sector of the city, where the Muslim population is under siege by Croat forces.

United Nations officials reported a decrease in the level of fighting around Sarajevo Tuesday, although the casualty count showed one dead and 13 wounded on the Muslim side and one wounded in Serb territory.

Russian drivers ferrying diesel into Sarajevo Tuesday faced problems when a tanker in their convoy was hit by small arms fire near a front-line area on the approach to the city, said Mr. Wilkinson.

The tanker limped into Sarajevo leaking diesel fuel.

In a city where electricity supplies are cut off more often than they are running, diesel is vital for keeping generators at hospitals and the main bakery

in operation.

U.N. military officers in central Bosnia said fighting in the region appeared to have abated since Christmas, when a holiday ceasefire was ignored by all sides, but the region remained tense with sporadic clashes between Muslims and Croats.

"Neither side can get sufficient firepower together to push through," a U.N. spokesman said.

In Sarajevo, reports that 11 Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia were subjected to a mock execution by their Serb captors one week ago were dismissed as "serious exaggeration" by the United Nations Wednesday.

This was despite Canadian Defence Ministry confirmation that its soldiers had been stood against a wall by Serbs who then opened fire around them.

Heavy fighting in Olovo and Teocak, northern Bosnia-Herzegovina, has claimed hundreds of lives, notably among Bosnian Serb forces over the past weeks, informed sources in Sarajevo said Wednesday.

The fighting pits Bosnian Serbs against mainly Muslim government forces.

Black Sea Fleet calls takeover a 'provocation'

SEVASTOPOL (AFP) — The command of the disputed Black Sea Fleet described Wednesday a takeover by armed Ukrainian marines of two offices as a "provocation" and warned it was prepared to take measures to counter the move.

In a statement released here, fleet spokesman Andrei Grachev and the head of engineering Vyacheslav Kim said Ukrainian authorities were using as a pretext to seize the offices the fact that the officers of the two units had pledged allegiance to Ukraine.

"This is a provocation aimed at disrupting Russian-Ukrainian relations," they said, adding: "We reserve the right to use adequate measures to stabilise the situation."

The statement came amid unconfirmed reports that Fleet Commander Admiral Eduard Balin was on holiday in Moscow and that his aide Vitaly Larionov, known for pro-Russian views, was in charge. Ukrainian marines armed with sub-machine guns seized Tuesday the offices of the fleet's Naval Engineering Services located in Odessa and threatened to open fire if navy officers attempted to enter, according to a report from the ITAR-TASS news agency.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry however denied the report and said that the officers were "made subordinate to the Ukrainian Navy Command by agreement" with the Black Sea Fleet Command.

Russia and Ukraine have been at odds over control of the Black Sea Fleet since the collapse of the Soviet Union but Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk agreed in August to lease the powerful armada to Russia.

The decision has sparked discontent in the ranks of Ukrainian seamen and officials say privately that the agreement between Mr. Kravchuk and Russian President Boris Yeltsin faces major hurdles in its implementation.

The port city of Sevastopol has also been plagued by a series of murders of top fleet officials including the director of a military factory, Viktor Semionov, and the head of the press service, Andrei Lazebnikov.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Grachev wants force of 2.1 million

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said Wednesday he wanted the strength of the armed forces to be no lower than 2.1 million men — 600,000 more than a final target approved by the old parliament. He told a Moscow news conference he would ask the newly-elected legislature to shelve a decision by the old Supreme Soviet to reduce the size of the armed forces to a maximum of one per cent of the population — meaning about 1.5 million men. The old parliament, subsequently dissolved by President Boris Yeltsin, in mid-1992 approved a reduction of military manpower to about 1.5 million by the year 2000. But Mr. Grachev said at the news conference that this decision had proved to be flawed and the optimum level for the armed forces was now regarded as 2.1 million men.

China defends new birth law

BEIJING (R) — China Wednesday defended a draft bill, which sparked an international furor when it was originally announced by the official Xinhua News Agency as eugenics law designed to stop "inferior" births. Describing the legislation as a "draft natal and health care law," a spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health said: "The essence of China's better birth policy is totally different from the racist 'eugenics' policy pursued by Adolf Hitler during (Germany's) Third Reich. The purpose of China's new law is 'to give birth to healthy future generations. The essential content is health care for mother and child,'" said the spokesman, quoted by Xinhua. The news agency earlier this month said the "draft law on eugenics and health protection" called for abortions and sterilisations "to avoid new births of inferior quality and heighten the standards of the whole population." On Wednesday, the spokesman disavowed this language, saying: "The official English translation of the new natal and health care law will not be finalised until the law is promulgated." But the draft law would require certain couples to postpone marriage or take long-term contraceptive measures after marriage, the spokesman said.

Californians moving out

WASHINGTON (AFP) — California's population growth was slower than the nation as a whole last year after more than two decades of setting the pace, the census bureau said. With the state's aerospace industry hard hit by a cut in defence spending with the end of the cold war, many Californians have decided to leave, heading to Washington, Oregon and Arizona, said Peter Morrison, a demographer with the Rand Corporation think tank in Santa Monica, California. "There are no longer rumours floating around elsewhere in the United States that you can come to California and get a good job," said Mr. Morrison. About 95 per cent of those who move to California are immigrants from developing nations looking for work, and many are young people who will give California a solid workforce for future growth, said Mr. Morrison. "They're more like unemployed college graduates than economic refugees," said Mr. Morrison.



TEMPLE OF HEAVEN: Some of the 30,000 visitors attending the inauguration of the Tian Tan (Temple of Heaven) Buddha gather at the Di Tan (Temple on Earth) to watch the ceremony Wednesday. The Buddha, made of bronze and measuring 26.4 metres in height, is the world's largest outdoor seated Buddha and took ten years to build (AFP photo)

Taiwan rebuffs China over 4th round of talks

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan, in a rebuff to China, said Wednesday it was in no hurry to return to the negotiating table with Beijing over an unprecedented spate of hijackings.

"Our two sides just held five days of talks in Taipei, and there is no sign that they (China) are ready to change their positions. There is no need for us to hurry to hold the fourth round of talks," said Yeh Chin-fong, vice chairwoman of the cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council (MAC).

She was speaking a day after the 10th hijacking of a Chinese plane to Taiwan this year and the third in as many weeks.

Kao Kuoing-Lian, also a vice

chairman of the MAC, said the matter would be taken up by the semi-official Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) which represents the Taipei government in the talks with China.

On Tuesday, the day of the latest hijacking, Beijing's equivalent to SEF, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), requested by letter a fourth round of talks on hijackings and other issues.

In a second letter Wednesday ARATS Vice Chairman Tang Shunbei invited SEF Vice Chairman Chiao Jen-Ho to meet him for talks in Beijing in January.

Bombs kill 5 in New York state

BUFFALO, New York (R) — A man harbouring a grudge against a western New York family sent them six parcel bombs, killing five people late Tuesday, police said.

Four of the bombs went off while two were defused by authorities, one as it sat in the delivery van at the driver's home.

Police, who said the bomber "knew what he was doing," released a composite drawing, showing a man in his 50s with a moustache and glasses. They said the drawing was based on descriptions from people who had picked up the packages.

The reason for the attacks was not known, but they said all the intended victims were members of the Buffalo-area Fowler family.

"We feel at this stage of the game it's somebody who has some type of vendetta or

vengeance against the family," said New York State Police Superintendent Thomas Constantine.

A state police spokesman said that terrorist and political motives have been ruled out in the bombing campaign.

The rash of bombings brought in investigators from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as state and local police.

Police said the bombs were located in toolboxes packed in cardboard boxes measuring 12 by 12 by 18 inches (30 by 30 by 45 cm).

The packages, most of which were delivered by private delivery services, contained a return address of the Liberty Iron and Metal Company of Erie, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Constantine said most of those killed were from the

Bhutto arrives in N. Korea

TOKYO (Agencies) — Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived in North Korea Wednesday and was welcomed by more than 100,000 people along her route from the airport into Pyongyang, official North Korean media reported.

Banners at the airport proclaimed: "Long live the friendship and solidarity between the peoples of Korea and Pakistan," said the Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo.

Ms. Bhutto, arriving from China, was greeted at the airport by Premier Kang Song San, it added.

North Korea's isolated Communist government regularly organises massive welcomes for leaders of nations it considers friendly.

The nuclear programmes of both North Korea and Pakistan have stirred worries abroad. The United States has cut off aid to Pakistan, which is considered capable of building nuclear weapons. It currently is negotiating with North Korea over that nation's refusal to accept full international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

In Beijing earlier, Ms. Bhutto condemned U.S. sanctions on Beijing and Islamabad for alleged transfers of sensitive missile technology as based on "erroneous information."

On the last day of a three-day visit to China, Ms. Bhutto told reporters the United States should lift the economic sanctions imposed in August for China's alleged sale of M-11 missile technology to Pakistan in violation of the missile technology control regime (MTCR).

"China and Pakistan have not violated the parameters of the MTCR agreement...and we regret the imposition of sanctions," she said. "We hope the United States will review its stand on this issue which has been based on erroneous information."

Cat inherits \$500,000 estate

SEATTLE (R) — Tinker, an 11-year-old Turkish Angora cat, will live the rest of its days in feline luxury after inheriting an estate valued at about \$500,000. Anna Morgan of Seattle, who died on May 22 at age 75, said in the will written shortly before her death that her goal was "primarily to provide for the care and welfare of my cat Tinker, who is my best friend and companion." Ms. Morgan, a retired department store clerk who never married, made no provision for her only immediate human survivor, a sister, said Attorney Charles Loneragan, who prepared the will. Under terms of the will, Ms. Morgan's apartment is being maintained for use of the cat at a monthly rent of \$385. In addition, a caretaker has been hired at a salary of \$10 a day to live in the apartment and feed and groom the cat. The will also provides for Tinker's medical bills and for a monthly visit by the long-haired white cat to a professional groomer. After Tinker's death, the will provides for the animal's burial in a pet cemetery, with the residual value of the estate to be given to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and two local charities.

Seles falls for man who tackled assailant

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — A German newspaper has reported that Monica Seles is developing a relationship with the man who helped tackle her assailant when the tennis star was stabbed on court in April. Bild Zeitung, Germany's largest selling newspaper, said that 26-year-old student Carsten Malessa and Seles "are writing romantic letters (or faxes) to each other." Bild also claimed the two have held several secret rendez-vous in New York. "And at Christmas," the newspaper added, "he sent her a ring. Is this love?" Malessa jumped on the back of Guenter Parche after Seles was stabbed in the back during a changeover at a tournament in Hamburg on April 30. Malessa, who later testified at Parche's trial, had been hired as a helper during the tournament. But the budding romance, Bild said, has made Carsten unhappy. "A proper love relationship is barely possible. Mom is simply too far away," Bild quoted him as saying.

Russian skater caught with his trousers down

MOSCOW (R) — Figure skater Vadim Naumov danced his way into the comedy shows Tuesday when he lost his trousers in an exhibition performance on the final day of the Russian Figure Skating Championships in St. Petersburg. Naumov, who took third place in the championship with pairs partner Evgenia Shishkova, completed his routine with his black trousers round his knees. His underpants, on display to a delighted audience, were red satin, with large black polka dots.

2 new suits filed against Michael Jackson

LOS ANGELES (R) — Pop superstar Michael Jackson, embroiled in sex molestation and drug addiction scandals, was sued Tuesday for \$20 million over the cancellation of his world concert tour. Jackson, who cancelled his Dangerous tour in November after announcing he was addicted to painkilling drugs, has been accused of molesting a 13-year-old boy. He was sued in Superior Court by Mama Concerts Rau GmbH, the tour's promoters. The singer, who is known for contributing millions of dollars to children's charities, has also been sued by the Children's Peace Foundation, it was learned Tuesday. The foundation, in a suit filed on Dec. 13 in Superior Court, claimed Jackson had engaged in a "pervasive pattern of fraud" in his business dealings and product representation. The suits added to the woes of the 35-year-old superstar who, in addition to being sued by the 13-year-old in civil court, also faces a suit by five former bodyguards who claim they were fired because they knew too much about his "nighttime visits with boys." Howard Weitzman, one of Jackson's attorneys, said he could not comment on the new suits because he had not seen them. "I have no idea what the allegations are. I think I should reserve comment until I see them," he said.

Handwritten note in Arabic script: "هذا من الاموال"

Small boats weather storm to lead Hobart

SYDNEY (R) — In amazing displays of seamanship, some of the smallest yachts in the Sydney-to-Hobart Race were leading the Fleet Wednesday after pounding seas and gales forced almost two-thirds of the 105 boats to retire.

The 14.3-metre (47-foot) Ninety Seven emerged a clear race leader among the remaining 38 boats late in the day and was expected to finish the 630-mile race late Thursday morning.

If the sloop crosses the line first, she will be the smallest yacht in the race's 49-year history to take line honours, race officials said.

In second place 14 miles astern was the 12.2-metre (40-foot) yacht Cuckoo's Nest, skippered by Australia's winning America's Cup tactician Hugh Trehan.

Wild Thing was third, followed by Hartz Mineral Waters and Sword of Orion.

"Everyone said this would be a race for the big boats because of the heavy seas and strong winds, but the smaller boats have proved the pundits wrong," a race official said.

"This has been a remarkable performance by Ninety Seven and an even more amazing achievement by Cuckoo's Nest. It's virtually unheard of for a yacht that size to be where it is."

Earlier in the day, race officials were confused about which boat was leading when pocket maxi Bobsled radioed her position as sixth. Organisers expected her to be first after race leader Brindabella retired overnight.

But the latest official race report placed Bobsled, steered by French America's Cup skipper Yves Pajot, eighth.

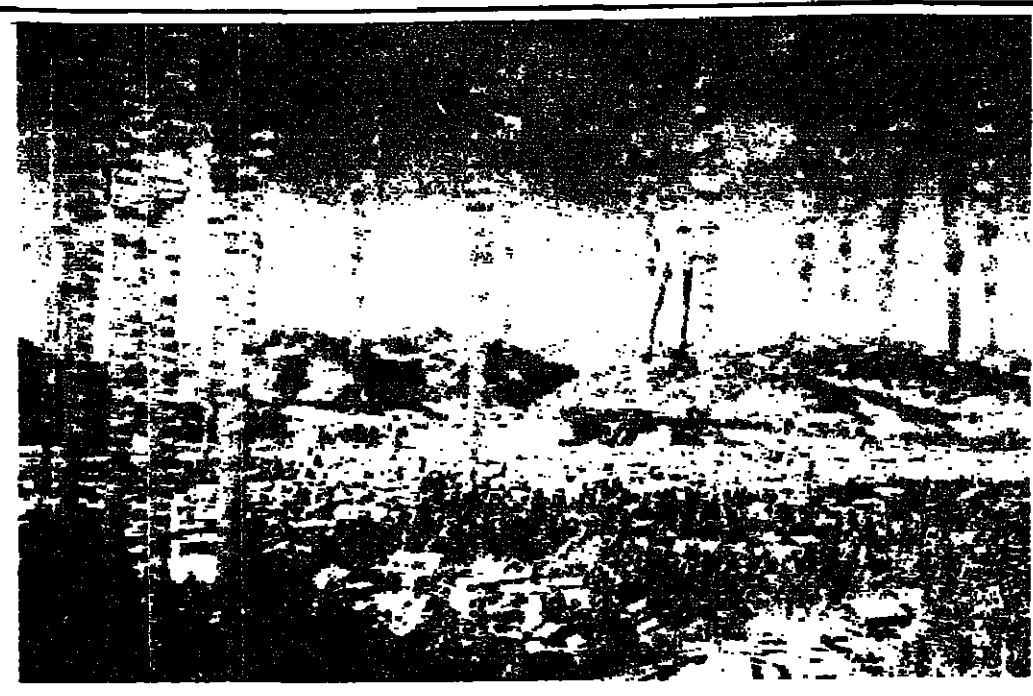
Late on Tuesday night, race favourite Brindabella, which had led from the start, was forced to retire with structural bow damage and sheltered in the lee of Flinders Island.

Owner George Snow said the 22.9 metre (75-foot) yacht had hit a submerged object that left a gouge in the bow.

"At the end of the day, the sea is a tough taskmaster," Snow said. "There was a strong southerly sea against a northern pattern — you just fall off the back of the waves."

"It's boat-breaking water and the hardest sea to sail against. It's the toughest race I've done."

The savage conditions sank two boats and swept one skipper overboard. He survived for six hours in the wild seas before being rescued. In 1984 bad weather led to a crew member's death when he was washed overboard and 104 boats retired from the fleet of 150.



TEST JUMP: A view through icicles of a ski year's Four Jump tour starting Thursday (AFP) Oberstdorf, Germany, in preparation for this

Mud halts race to African desert

PARIS (AFP) — Bad weather brought the Paris-Dakar Rally to a halt on only its second day with competitors getting bogged down in mud.

None of the motorcycles started the 8.5km second special stage at Villeneuve d'Ornon near Bordeaux Wednesday. The car race was stopped after 38 of the 95 cars had made an attempt on a shortened 4.5km course.

Torrential rain over the past 10 days turned the course into axle deep mud. Flooded lakes on the route had also spilled over on to the tracks. "It was

like driving in a quagmire," said German Mitsubishi driver Erwin Weber.

Most of the cars have been prepared for the North African desert and most drivers complained that humidity inside their cars was the worst problem. Windows got steamed up so none could see where they were driving.

Of the cars to finish, Frenchman Claude Arnoux, in a buggy that he designed, was fastest in seven minutes 42sec.

Bruno Saby, who led after the first stage, was first onto the muddy roads in his Mits-

bishi and could only manage eighth fastest.

Organisers planned to award a time to all the competitors who did not start which would be used for the overall rankings.

The rally headed for Grenada in Spain where two special stages will be held Thursday.

Frenchman Pierre Lartigue, second in the stage, took the overall lead from Saby.

The organisers decided to award all cars finishing after 20th the same time of 13 minutes 12sec which would be used for the overall standings.

Gulko, Anand head chess tournament

AMSTERDAM (R) — American grandmaster Boris Gulko squeezed into joint first place in the Professional Chess Association (PCA) tournament in Groningen when he beat 20-year-old Russian Sergei Tiviakov in Tuesday's ninth round.

The American shares the lead in the 230,000 competition with Indian's Viswanathan Anand, the world number three.

Anand, 24, unleashed the feared Panov attack on the Caro-Kann defence against Michael Adams of Britain, but despite his attacking prowess managed only a draw.

The 46-year-old Gulko,

playing the black pieces against Tiviakov, chose a Sicilian defence and after a positional struggle found himself with the advantage of a bishop against three pawns in a complex endgame.

The Russian's king was outmanoeuvred and he resigned on move 61.

Eighteen-year-old Russian star Vladimir Kramnik beat Grigory Kaidanov of the United States to stay in joint third place, half a point behind the leaders.

American Gata Kamsky, also 18, is level with Kramnik after beating Evgeny Bareev of Russia.

The Groningen Tourna-

ment, played to find a challenger for the unofficial PCA world chess champion Garry Kasparov, allows seven players to qualify for the next stage of the championship.

Anand, behind only Kasparov and official world champion Anatoly Karpov in the world rankings, remains a favourite for the 40,000 first prize.

The PCA qualifying tournament features 54 of the world's best grandmasters in an eleven round tournament which concludes on Dec. 30. The first seven in Groningen will qualify for the final stages of the unofficial PCA World Championship cycle.

Trinkl pips Girardelli in downhill skiing

BORMIO, Italy (AFP) — Hannes Trinkl of Austria produced his second shock Alpine World Cup win in a week at the Bormio men's downhill Wednesday.

Without a victory before this season, the 25-year-old won the Italian downhill in 1min 55.76sec for his new upset. Five-time World Cup winner Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg was second 0.28sec behind. Tommy Moe of America claimed his second third place of the season in 1min 56.27sec.

At Lech Am Arlberg, Austria last week, Trinkl won a super giant slalom racing from

51st start position. This time he was second down the slope and everyone knew his was the time to beat.

Trinkl is now a strong but surprising contender for a place in the four man Austrian team to go to the Lillehammer Winter Olympics in February. Before his victory in Lech, Trinkl had only two third places last season to his credit.

Only Gunter Mader in the rest of the team can match his two World Cup victories this season. Mader finished seventh to take first place in the overall rankings from Norway's Kjetil Andre Aamodt. Mader is now six points ahead of Aamodt on 485.

Another Austrian star, Patrick Ortlieb, who won the Val Gardena downhill and had started as one of Wednesday's favourites, was 0.74sec off Trinkl's time and finished fifth.

Girardelli, returning to the piste where he decided in 1985 to race for Luxembourg instead of Austria, looked as though he might challenge Trinkl.

The 30-year-old World Cup champion, who has yet to win a race this season, was twice second fastest in training. He was 0.30sec off the pace at the first time check and just 0.12sec behind at the final time gate. Though he could not keep up the pace, Girardelli still got his best position

Chelsea's dismal run ends with shock win over Newcastle

LONDON (Agencies) — Mark Stein gave Chelsea the one present they badly wanted for Christmas when his 11th-minute goal brought them a shock 1-0 victory over in-form Newcastle in the English Premier League.

Stein's goal gave Chelsea their first win in 12 league matches since Sept. 25 and brought to an end one of the worst runs in their recent history which had seen them take just two points from a possible 33 and slip from sixth to one-from-bottom in the 22-club division. The win lifted them to 19th place.

Fifth-placed Newcastle had lost only one of their previous nine matches and failed to score for the first time since the opening day of the season when they lost 1-0 to Tottenham.

Tottenham's season has had more downs than ups since then but Spurs brightened their Christmas holiday with a 3-1 win over West Ham who delighted the home fans after only 11 minutes when Matt Holmes scored.

But Spurs recovered with goals from Jason Dozzell, Micky Hazard and Darren Anderton for only their second win in 13 league starts.

The two other Premier League matches played Tuesday both ended in draws.

Liverpool drew for the fifth successive match when they were held 1-1 at Anfield by their bogey team Wimbledon.

while in an early relegation battle Manchester City and Southampton drew 1-1 at Maine Road.

The match between Coventry and Ipswich was postponed because of snow.

Chelsea's victory followed their dismal 3-1 defeat at fellow strugglers Southampton Monday when Stein scored his first goal for the club since his 1.5 million pounds (2.26 million) move from stock in October.

After Chelsea's poor show at Southampton manager Glenn Hoddle made three changes, bringing in Eriq Zola, Andy Dow and Neil Shipperley for Gareth Hall, Jakob Kjaerberg and David Hopkin.

The move seemed to work — even though Newcastle dominated for long periods and Andy Cole was only an inch away from his 26th goal of the season late in the game.

Chelsea's London rivals Tottenham have also struggled this season, especially following injuries to striker Teddy Sheringham and captain Gary Mabbutt.

But, orchestrated by 33-year-old midfielder hazard in his second spell at Spurs, they played some enterprising soccer against West Ham and recovered well from Monday's 3-1 home defeat by Norwich.

Hazard's artistry, accurate passing and appetite wrenched the match from West Ham's grasp and Tottenham could have won by an even more

convincing score if substitute Sol Campbell had not tapped his shot wide from eight metres out near the end.

Liverpool's recent poor run continued against Wimbledon, who knocked them out of the League Cup on penalties on Dec. 14.

John Fashanu's first goal since he scored against champions Manchester United on Nov. 22, wiped out teammate John Scales' own goal after 27 minutes which had given the Anfield side the lead.

Liverpool made a last ditch attempt to steal the points but could find no way through, mainly thanks to some fine work by Dutch goalkeeper Hans Segers.

The Wimbledon goalkeeper made flying saves to deny Fowler twice and maintained manager Joe Kinnear's record of never losing to once-mighty Liverpool in seven matches as Wimbledon manager.

Tuesday's matches had no bearing on the top of the table where Manchester United are 13 points clear of their nearest challengers Leeds.

Meanwhile, Everton's players and fans want a decision on the English premiership club's takeover battle before their season turns into a relegation battle.

The supporters demonstrated their anger with jeers at the directors' box following Monday night's 2-0 home defeat by Sheffield Wednesday and the players have joined the

bandwagon. Winger Peter Beagrie said the players were finding it increasingly difficult to ignore the speculation.

"We want it resolved as soon as possible," he said. "We're all under contract to the club and we all give it 100 per cent, but the sooner this is resolved the better for us."

Caretaker boss Jimmy Gabriel has not seen Everton score a goal since manager Howard Kendall resigned on Dec. 4.

But the managerial situation seems unlikely to be resolved until the board decides who is to take over the club and inject the cash Everton so desperately need to buy new players.

Striker Tony Cotte said: "We need a manager as soon as possible. 'We're like a ship in the Atlantic floating without a captain. If Jimmy Gabriel is to have the job for a few weeks, he should be told.'"

However, the Goodison board have decided they require further clarification of the rival offers from showbusiness impresario Bill Kenwright's consortium and Transmire chairman Peter Johnson before they make an announcement.

Kenwright said: "There are a few more facts the board need to know and they're going to find out those facts and consider them further."

"There are questions to be sorted out, but I want to get started and it will be me."

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APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ A 3

♥ J 7 5

♦ A K 7 4

♣ 8 5 2

EAST

♠ 8 6 4 2

♥ K Q 10 6

♦ A 8 4 3 2

♣ 10 5

♠ K J

♥ Q 10 9

♦ Q 9 3

♣ A 7 4 3

The bidding:

North East South West

1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass

1 NT Pass 4 ♠ Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♣

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bid facing a partner who opened,

South knew exactly where the hand

should be played once North had

shown a balanced minimum opening bid. The final contract was reached via the most direct route.

West led the king of hearts and, in response to an encouraging eight from East, continued with a low heart to the ace, declarer ruffing.

When East discarded a heart on the second round of trumps, declarer abandoned that suit and started on clubs, cashing the ace and continuing with a club. West won and forced declarer with a club, setting up a long card in that suit, but the defenders were able to cash a heart for down one.

The 4-1 trump split was a little unlucky, but the debacle could have been avoided had South been prepared for the problem. To protect against repeated forces, declarer must set up the side suit before drawing trumps. After ruffing the first heart, declarer should immediately play the ace and another club. South can ruff the heart return and force out the last club. The defenders are helpless — another heart lead will be ruffed on the table. No matter what the defense does declarer has the rest of the tricks.

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سورة الفاتحة

NEWS IN BRIEF

Qatari official thanks Saddam for hospitality

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Qatari army's deputy chief of staff, Sheikh Mohammad Ben Fahd Ben Mohammad Al Thani, has thanked President Saddam Hussein for the hospitality he received during a recent visit here, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. The Iraqi leader met with Sheikh Mohammad on Dec. 5 in what the Qatari Foreign Ministry described as a "private visit." But informed sources in the region said the Foreign Ministry's statement followed strong protests by Kuwait, which Baghdad's forces occupied for seven months before being ousted by a U.S.-led coalition in February 1991. Kuwait had threatened to boycott Qatar during the 14th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit last week in Riyadh. Sheikh Mohammad, a member of Qatar's ruling family, said in his message to President Saddam that he thought of Iraq as his "second home." INA said.

Landmine kills Turkish troops

ANKARA (R) — Twelve Turkish gendarme commandos were killed when their vehicle struck a landmine believed to have been planted by rebel Kurds in southeast Turkey, Anadolu news agency reported on Wednesday. It said the explosion occurred on Tuesday night near the village of Kizilirmak in the southeastern province of Mardin. In a separate incident, security sources said gunmen killed a teacher in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir on Wednesday. The rebels have in the past targeted teachers as part of their campaign against the state-run education system in the region.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman has new lawyer

NEW YORK (R) — Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the cleric charged in the alleged bombing conspiracy to blow up key New York buildings, has chosen a new lawyer to defend him at his upcoming trial, an aide said Tuesday. The court-appointed attorney, Richard Jasper, was selected by Sheikh Abdul Rahman after a lengthy interview process, said Ahmad Sattar, an aide and translator for the cleric. One of the cleric's former lawyers, Michael Warren, a Muslim, will also represent Sheikh Abdul Rahman, Mr. Sattar said. Mr. Warren had negotiated Sheikh Abdul Rahman's surrender to immigration authorities last July.

Belgian couple found murdered in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — An Algerian-Belgian couple were found murdered Wednesday at their home in Bouira, southeast of the Algerian capital, Algerian security services said. No other details were immediately available. The Belgian spouse, believed to be the wife, was the 24th foreigner murdered in Algeria since Sept. 21 and the 17th since an ultimatum by Muslim fundamentalists warning foreigners to leave the country or face death expired Nov. 30. The wave of killings came amid a Muslim fundamentalist campaign launched after a government crackdown on Islamic militants.

Israel suspends tank commander

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army suspended on Wednesday a tank commander who mistakenly opened fire in southern Lebanon killing a Norwegian U.N. officer, military officials said. Northern region commanding officer General Yizhak Mordechai ordered the man to be suspended during an inquiry into the incident in the occupied zone. A second Norwegian serving in the United Nations Interior Force in Lebanon was wounded in Monday's incident which led to an official protest by the Norwegian government.

Killed in Afghan clashes

KABUL (AFP) — Eight people were killed and 12 injured in gun battles between troops loyal to Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyazar and an Uzbek militia force over the kidnapping of a woman, witnesses said here Wednesday. The abducted woman, a government employee, also died when Mr. Hekmatyazar's Hezbe-Islami troops tried to rescue her, they said. The incident on Monday triggered fierce fighting in several Kabul districts causing the casualties. The witnesses said the woman, whose name was not disclosed, was abducted by two soldiers belonging to Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum's Jumbish-e-Milli. The soldiers, waited at Kart-e Nau bus station, forcibly abducted her and were pursued by members of Hezbe-Islami. Both the soldiers and the woman were killed, a colleague of the woman said.

Hurd visits Lebanon Monday

BEIRUT (AP) — Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd is due to make a four-hour visit to Beirut Jan. 3, Lebanese foreign Ministry sources said Wednesday. He will become the first British foreign secretary to visit Lebanon since its 15-year civil war erupted in 1975, the sources said. They said Mr. Hurd will arrive at Beirut airport directly from London at 7 p.m. (1700 GMT) Monday. He flies back at 11 p.m. (2100 GMT), the sources said. Mr. Hurd will hold talks with his Lebanese counterpart Faris Bouze and other government leaders on the Middle East peace negotiations, the sources said.

Archbishop Carey cancels Khartoum visit

LONDON (AFP) — The archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, has cancelled a visit to the Sudanese capital Khartoum but plans to go to the south of the country to show support for its Christian minority, a church spokesman said here Wednesday. The ruling junta had not allowed the archbishop to visit as a guest of the church in Sudan and to have accepted the official invitation of President Omar Hassan Al Bashir would have restricted his movements, the spokesman told the BBC. Archbishop Carey wanted to meet Anglican Bishop Peter Elshersh, who was flogged in public in July after an Islamic court convicted him of adultery. The sentence was a "particularly humiliating act," Archbishop Carey said at the time. He was due in the Kenyan capital Nairobi later on Wednesday, planning to go to southern Sudan.

Floodwaters threaten Normandy capital

PARIS (R) — The Seine River, swollen by floodwaters that devastated regions upstream in northern and eastern France, is expected to overflow its banks in the city of Rouen Wednesday, government officials said. Authorities in Rouen, capital of the Normandy region northwest of Paris, said the river would rise above its alert level of nine metres (30 feet) and water might reach nearby buildings at the end of the week. Upstream in Paris, the river's level was again rising after cutting off parts of the riverfront expressway at the weekend. Visitors could be forced to cut because only smaller vessels could pass safely under bridges, an operation said.

Troops capture Khmer Rouge bases

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Government forces have recaptured major Khmer Rouge bases in central Cambodia and are advancing on the radical faction's headquarters for all operations in north and central Cambodia, an internal military report said Wednesday. Government troops Tuesday overran the Khmer Rouge bases at Kranya and Sokream, which were taken in a government offensive in August but were then lost when the guerrillas mounted a large-scale counter-attack, the report said. Minister of Defence Tea Banh acknowledged that the government troops had taken Kranya and Sokream, as well as two other villages which had also been lost to the Khmer Rouge. He refused, however, to comment on the military report's assertion that government troops were closing in on Anlong Veng near the Thai border in Siem Reap province.

Israel continues to grab W. Bank land

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian researchers have accused Israel of grabbing more land in the occupied West Bank since its peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation in an attempt to establish facts on the ground.

Khader Shuqairat, director of the Jerusalem-based Land and Water Establishment, said Israeli authorities in the West Bank have declared privately-owned Arab land a nature reserve.

"Our researchers and legal experts can hardly cope with the complaints of land confiscations or incursions by Jewish settlers," Mr. Shuqairat told Reuters.

"I believe the Israelis are

trying to create new facts on the ground while the negotiations go on," he said.

Israel denied the accusations. Mr. Shuqairat said the Israeli government and Jewish settlers in the occupied territories have confiscated about 5,000 acres of land since Israel and the PLO signed a Sept. 13 declaration of principles on Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Shuqairat said the declaration of the nature reserve in West Bank land just outside Jerusalem was a classic Israeli method for taking land for its own use.

A spokeswoman for the Israeli military government's civil administration in the West

Bank said there were no confiscation orders issued against the land.

"This is a continuation of the planning process which started in the past, long before the declaration of principles," said Elise Shizar.

She said the plans do not deprive land owners of their title but require them to coordinate use with military authorities.

Palestinians said Israel in the past has used such methods to take over Palestinian land which was eventually used by Jewish settlers.

Palestinian lawyer Ibrahim Al Barghuthi, a legal expert on land confiscations, represents the landowners from four Arab villages north of Jeru-

salem appealing against the military government's decision to turn 1,500 acres of their land into a national park.

"Since the confiscation orders were made after the Sept. 13 (peace accord), it can only be classified as political confiscations," he told Reuters.

The land belonging to the villages of Nabi Sumwail, Deit Manina, Bir Nabala and Al Jebb connects the Jewish settlement of another settlement further north called Givat Ze'ev.

Mr. Barghouthi said he believed the land would be used to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem to the north to incorporate Givat Ze'ev under what is known as the greater

Jerusalem area plan.

Since it occupied the West Bank in 1967, Israel has closed off or confiscated about 60 per cent of the land.

Militant protest

Israeli Likud bloc leader Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday took part in a banned demonstration grouping dozens of right-wing militants near the Palestinian peace delegation's East Jerusalem headquarters.

"Here at Orient House the building blocks for a future Palestinian state, the creation of which we oppose, are being laid," Mr. Netanyahu told reporters.

Japanese desert Tokyo for New York

TOKYO (R) — Japan began to shut up shop for New York Wednesday as Tokyo residents left for the countryside in their thousands, packing bullet trains and leaving normally crammed rush-hour subways half empty. But travel authorities said the flight from the capital was less frenzied than usual, with the worst economic downturn for two decades keeping many people home. Seats on domestic flights were all taken but a flood of last minute cancellations meant many waiting-list passengers could fly. With most companies finishing the year's work Tuesday, business districts in downtown Tokyo began to take on their familiar New Year ghost-town appearance. But open-air markets were thronged with shoppers snapping up seasonal delicacies of crab, squid, rice cakes and fish eggs. They were also stocking up on supplies for a five-day break that will see most of the nation's stores pull down their shutters. Though fewer Japanese are travelling domestically, a record number were going abroad this holiday season, according to the Japan Travel Bureau. A total of 600,000 travellers was anticipated between Dec. 22 and Jan. 9, a rise of 14 per cent on last year which travel agencies attributed to the high yen.

Roger Clinton plans to wed 'someday soon'

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (AP) — Roger Clinton says he plans to marry "soon, someday soon," but the White House says the president's brother has no imminent wedding plans. Roger Clinton and his girlfriend, Molly Martin, of Dallas, were among the Clinton family members who flew here on Air Force One on Monday after spending Christmas at the White House. Asked by reporters at the airport about rumours of the wedding this week, he said, "I have nothing to say to you, buddy." However, in off-camera remarks to local television reporters Monday, he said he would be getting married "soon, someday soon," but he gave no date. White House spokesman Jeff Eller insisted repeatedly Monday that the president's brother had no imminent wedding plans. The couple left the presidential entourage and was last seen with the first family Monday night.

Walesa's daughter to dance with French ballet

PARIS (AP) — The 15-year-old daughter of Polish leader Lech Walesa will dance the title role in La Gitane when the Ballet De Nancy Et De Lorraine performs in Warsaw on New Year's Eve. Magda Walesa will dance the role of Loretta, kidnapped at the age of 14 by gypsies and who returns home to be reunited with loved ones 10 years later. The three-act ballet was created in 1838 by Philippe Taglioni. The new production, headed by Pierre Lacotte, choreographer and artistic director of the French company, will remain faithful to the style and tenor of the original 19th century ballet. Lacotte is expected to meet Walesa after the performance, the ballet company said.

Diana gives up her bodyguards

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana has struck another blow for personal freedom by dispensing with her official bodyguards, a British newspaper reported Wednesday. "At her own request, she will no longer be guarded round the clock. Out shopping, visiting friends or just taking a drive, the princess plans to do it alone," the Today tabloid said in a front-page story. It quoted an unidentified royal source as saying: "She wants to be able to melt into the background. She has had no private life for 13 long years." "Freedom from having every move watched means a lot to the princess." Today said Princess Diana had been forced to accept armed bodyguards on her current visit to Washington after U.S. security chiefs and British embassy officials insisted the streets of the American capital were too dangerous. Princess Diana and her husband Prince Charles separated a year ago.



Municipal bulldozers at work on Saturday tearing down an "illegal" vegetable market in Ras Al 'Ain (this photo was made available to the Jordan Times by one of the vendors who operated a stall in the market)

Municipality dismantles 'illegal' Ras Al 'Ain vegetable market

By Ayman Al Safadi

AMMAN — Nearly 100 people Wednesday staged a sit-in in front of parliament building to protest the demolition of a vegetable market in eastern Amman by the Amman Municipality on Saturday.

The protesters, most of them vegetable vendors, raised banners demanding that deputies correct the injustice they claim the municipality inflicted on them by demolishing the market. The claimed 5,000 people were deprived of their only source of income when the municipality sent its bulldozers to put down the zinc-and-metal-roofed market Saturday morning.

"Let the deputies feed our children," said one of the protesters who added that he and his nearly 40 colleagues were ready to go on with their sit-in until they are allowed to return to their market, located in Ras Al 'Ain area opposite the central vegetable market.

Market owner Shehbeh Al Shuweiki claims the municipality demolished the market without previous warning but Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi told the Jordan Times the municipality had twice warned Mr. Shuweiki that the market had to be dismantled because it was operating without a licence and violated municipality regulations. Mr. Abbadi rejected claims

that the municipality's action deprived the vegetable vendors of their income saying they can go on with their business at a well-organised market built by the municipality opposite the central vegetable market.

He said the municipality built this market in September to solve the problem of street vendors who erected their stalls there at a monthly rent of JD100-JD180 each.

Some of the vendors who talked to the Jordan Times, however, said they would not be able to pay the rent demanded by the Municipality as it is two to three times higher than the JD 50 they currently pay. But Dr. Abbadi said he had already issued instructions that the rent be lowered by up to 50 per cent. The market, he said, can accommodate all the vendors.

Even though Mr. Shuweiki claims he started building his market in May and made it operational in August, Dr. Abbadi asserts the vendors did not start selling there when Mr. Shuweiki lowered the rent.

Mr. Shuweiki said he decided to build the market at the request of former Amman Mayor Mohammed Al Bashir to solve the problem of street vendors. He said the municipality provided the market with garbage containers and the director of the Ras Al 'Ain area helped design it.

But Mr. Bashir told the Jordan Times he made no such request to Mr. Shuweiki.

"I do not know of this market. I did not approve it," said Mr. Bashir, adding the municipality would have issued a licence for the market had it requested or approved it.

Mr. Shuweiki said he applied for a licence in November but Mayor Abbadi said the municipality would not license the market because it did not comply with building regulations and its location, near a traffic light, is dangerous. He also said vegetables used to be smuggled into the market before tax was collected on them.

Mr. Shuweiki, who said he would sue the municipality, blamed Dr. Abbadi for not giving him time to dismantle the market. But Dr. Abbadi said Mr. Shuweiki was given three months before the Municipality sent bulldozers to destroy it.

"I asked (Dr. Abbadi) for six hours to dismantle the market when he sent the bulldozers but he refused to give me that time," said Mr. Shuweiki.

"I gave him three months," responded Dr. Abbadi. Dr. Abbadi said many of the vendors who used to operate from Mr. Shuweiki's market met with him Tuesday and agreed to resume their business from the municipality market. "They were happy with the solution," he said.

'Pragmatists' expected to win IAF leadership

By Mariam Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — "Pragmatists" of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) are expected to win most of the seats on the party's executive council in Friday's elections, IAF insiders predicted.

Coming a week after the election of a 120-member Majlis Al Shura, Friday's elections are expected to witness the reelection of at least half of the council's 17 current members as well as some more "disciplined" members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The resolution to include members of the decision-making branch of the Muslim Brotherhood came about after six acting executive council members broke disciplinary rules of the party by resigning after an inter-party dispute last week.

"This really made the cadre of the Muslim Brotherhood, which played a low profile in the IAF up until recently, reassess the situation," said a veteran Brotherhood insider.

The IAF is the political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and while

Brotherhood membership is not a pre-requisite for IAF membership, most IAF members are Brotherhood members as well.

"The lack of discipline among some IAF members has given the impression within the Brotherhood that the IAF cannot survive without the discipline from some of the more politically astute and disciplined Brotherhood members," said the insider.

The differences between the "doves" and the "hawks" within the IAF and the Brotherhood rest on two issues, — party discipline and the application of Islamic teachings.

The so-called doves believe in absolute party discipline without any public dissent and more pragmatic application of Islamic teachings which do not compromise principles but reassess the means by which the principles can be fulfilled.

The "hawks" are more hard line vis-a-vis Islamic teachings in the sense that they refuse the issues of compromise and reject pragmatic

political action. Many hawks, including former Brotherhood spokesman Ziad Abu Ghanimeh, have gone public with internal IAF disputes on these issues and created havoc within the movement.

A majority of IAF members, estimated by the party at between 3,000 and 5,000, supports the pragmatic branch since it has enabled the IAF to act as a legal political party and has enabled the group to enter the highest ranks of the government.

"The idea is to change society slowly and from within, not to oppose it and close the doors to co-existence," said one of the senior ideologues of the movement.

Dr. Ishaq Farhan is expected to be reelected as IAF secretary general in Friday's elections while Majlis Al Shura members Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, Dr. Abdullah Akaileh, Dr. Bassam Amoush, and deputies Hamam Said, Hamzeh Mansour and Dr. Mohammad Owaida are expected to be elected members.

Abu Ghanimeh erred by going public

AMMAN — The Muslim Brotherhood's expulsion last week of its former spokesman Ziad Abu Ghanimeh marked a high point in the changing ethos of the best-organised political movement in the Kingdom.

Mr. Abu Ghanimeh, who has been a Brotherhood member for 45 of his 60 years, was expelled from the Muslim Brotherhood Society three months in a dispute over new membership and the participation of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in the Nov. 8 legislative elections.

Mr. Abu Ghanimeh, a long-time critic of pragmatic attitudes within the Brotherhood and the IAF, the political wing of the movement, had called for a boycott of the elections after the one-person, one-vote voting formula was introduced into the election law.

Mr. Abu Ghanimeh, who held a seat on the IAF's 17-member executive council and 120-seat Majlis Al Shura before resigning last week, said that the IAF should not join any government that is not Islamic and vocally opposed IAF decisions to "accommodate the peace process."

IAF leaders insist that Mr. Abu Ghanimeh was neither a "radical thinker" nor a leader within the movement.

"Ziad Abu Ghanimeh is just an individualist," IAF Secretary-General Ishaq Al Farhan said at a press conference last week.

Other critics of Mr. Abu Ghanimeh contend that the administrator at the Islamic Hospital in Amman was politically motivated in his actions. "He wanted to run for a seat in Parliament and he did not have enough support from the Brotherhood or the IAF, and thus he used exposure as a sort of blackmail," said one IAF activist.

But not all IAF members agree with the critics. After a shouting match about the inclusion of 300 new members into the IAF, five members of the executive council of the IAF joined Mr. Abu Ghanimeh in a protest resignation.

Hamam Said, Ahmad Kofahi and Qandeel Shaker were among them. While all of the resignees except Mr. Abu Ghanimeh have since rejoined, they say they did not side with Mr. Abu Ghanimeh for the sake of opposition.

"There are fundamental differences to political approaches within the IAF. But most opponents to the existing leadership approach try to resolve these differences without ever going public. Ziad Abu Ghanimeh erred not by voicing his opinion but by going public," explained one of those who had joined Mr. Abu Ghanimeh in resigning.

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